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Guided Tour: Magic Carpet

Plus Reviews of:
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An IDG Communications Publication

March 1995
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ON THE COVER: Magic Carpet

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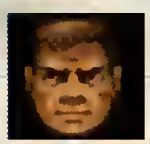

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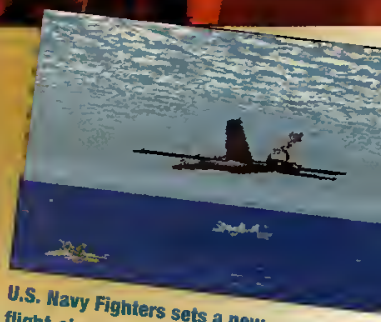

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March 1995

Editor's Page

Fredric Paul

More of the Same

I guess it had to happen. After all, it happened to every other entertainment medium you can name.

But still, I'm saddened that it happened to multimedia so fast.

I'm talking about the rise of sequels in the ranks of interactive entertainment. Look around the store shelves these days, and you'll see a slew of sequels and remakes. Eleven of the 25 best-sellers topping the charts on the *E²* Leader Board (page 18) are remakes, rehashes, or recreations. And several of the Second Annual *Electronic Entertainment* Editors' Choice Awards (page 45) were presented to products built on earlier offerings.

In fact, the Best Game winner—Doom II—is a sequel to a shareware game. The elements that make Doom II a winner were developed in the original Doom; the sequel adds plenty of cool bells and whistles, but you don't see any striking breakthroughs. (For details on how to deal with what *is* new in Doom II, see our Strategy Guide on page 53.)

Doom II's roots in an earlier game are in no way unique. Consider Wing Commander III, TIE Fighter, SimCity 2000, The Lemmings Chronicles, Kyrandia Book Three: Malcolm's Revenge, Microsoft Flight Simulator 5.0, and plenty of others. They're all great games, but none is brand-new.

Just because a game doesn't have a version number in its title doesn't mean it's an original, either. LucasArts' TIE Fighter, for example, is really just a role reversal on the company's successful X-Wing game—which in turn was based on Lucas' *Star Wars* movies. (The company has become a big player recycling characters and situations created in the '70s.) And while SimCity 2000 isn't the two-thousandth in Maxis' series of city simulators, it's just one of several improvements on the original SimCity.

The trend toward retreads is likely to accelerate. Two of the biggest entertainment titles scheduled for 1995 include The 11th Hour, the sequel to The 7th Guest, and a follow-up to the phenomenal Myst.

And it's not just games. For kids, Brøderbund's Carmen Sandiego has spawned an entire family of spinoff products, while other popular characters—from Humongous' Putt-Putt to Mindscape's licenses of Super Mario—are churned out in new PC titles on a regular basis. On the multimedia entertainment side, we're looking at updates of the classic encyclopedia programs and movie reference guides.

The news isn't all bad. The built-in appeal of a sequel can induce game developers and multimedia producers to invest in creating new products. For consumers, sequels mix a familiar scenario with new action and improved technology.

That's key, because unlike the movie business, where each *Rocky* is worse than the one before, advancing interactive technology often leads to interactive sequels that are undeniably superior to the originals. But for games and multimedia to fulfill their potential, the commercial fascination with sequels and updates must leave room for innovative new projects.

FP

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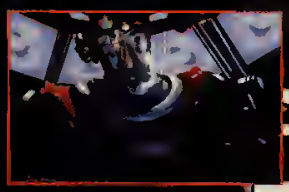

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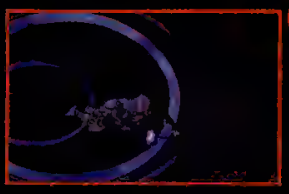

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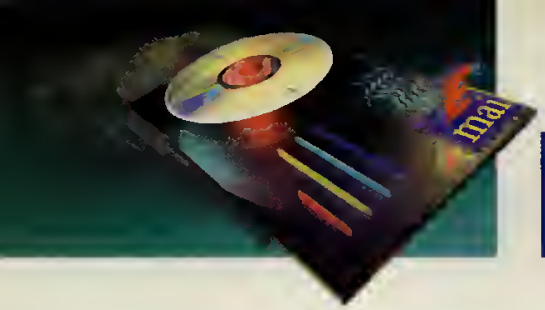

Letters

Jamming January

I would just like to commend you on your first anniversary issue! I like *E²*'s art and the new look. You are using more colors that really bring out what the magazine is trying to say. The game review title boxes for each individual game are terrific as well.

Second, I really like how *E²* includes more Macintosh, 3DO, and other game-platform reviews. This really shows how *E²* cares about a wide variety of system owners, not just those with IBM compatibles.

Finally, I would like to say thank you for the flight-simulator feature ("On the Wings of Eagles—and Warthogs and Camels," page 51). I'm a big fan of flight sims, and your article will really ease my troubles when I go and choose a flight sim at the software store.

Thank you, and a job well done on the January issue.

Victor Shih
San Francisco, CA

Mac Refugee

Why do all the new games always come out for DOS PCs first, then the Mac later? It usually takes a year for any significant game to become available for Mac users. For example, I bought Westwood Studios' Fables and Friends: Book I, only to find that it had already been out on the PC for an entire year. So much for buying hot games if you are a Mac owner.

All the Mac owners I know are upset that game companies develop for PCs first. Why do Mac owners always lose out?

Robert D. Del Raso
Watertown, MA

There are several reasons why Mac games get short shrift, but basically it all comes down to money. Game companies want the biggest return on their investment, so they develop for the platform with the most users—DOS. Once they know that the game is going to be a hit, then they may create a version for the Mac, Sega CD, 3DO, or CD-i. Unfortunately, it usually takes some time to determine if a game is worth cross-platform status. Hence, Mac users, among others, have to wait to play. —*Ed.*

Power-Hungry Editors

After reading your S.O.S. reply to "Which Windows" (November 1994, page 119), I was wondering what to buy, Windows 95 or Warp OS/2 3.0? Is either one better than the other? I've heard that both operating systems have software packages included when you buy them.

I also have one complaint: I have a 486DX2/66, which I recently purchased. In several *E²* articles, you have called 486s too slow for many multimedia titles. You have also advised readers only to buy them if "you find a good deal—free, for instance." Isn't this a little harsh? Pentiums might be fast and powerful, but they are very expensive, especially here in Canada.

It seems to me that the editors at *E²* are either very power-hungry or have some kind of deal going with the computer companies. My 486DX2 is more than adequate to handle the new games that have come out, such as The 7th Guest, Critical Path, and the like.

Otherwise, I look forward to your magazine every month.

Joel Greenwood
Bruce County, Ontario, Canada

Let's answer your questions in order. First, if you're looking for a 32-bit operating system right now, you have to go with OS/2 Warp, because Windows 95 is not out yet. It will give you better task-switching and multitasking than Windows 3.1, but not many games and multimedia titles support OS/2 directly. Microsoft claims that Windows 95 will be a stellar game platform, and several large game companies, including Virgin Interactive and Mindscape, are currently developing games for it. You'll just have to wait a few months—or longer.

As for the 486 vs. Pentium debate, you're right that The 7th Guest and Critical Path run fine on a 486. But for tomorrow's titles, the Pentium is the way to go—even with the much-publicized flaw in the math coprocessor. Several new titles, including Magic Carpet, U.S. Navy Fighters, and Wing Commander III, play much better on a Pentium. And the next generation of games will want even more power. —*Ed.*

Supermarket Software

I have always been amazed by the appearance of sensational books and TV movies right after some high-profile news story catches the public's eye. It seems as if the authors and screenwriters were waiting for the event to happen and penned their drafts overnight, knowing publishers and producers would snatch them up without a thought. But until I saw your review of The People vs. O.J.: An Interactive Companion to the O.J. Simpson Trial ("O.J., Oy Vey!" January 1995, page 23), I had no idea this trend was infecting software. I hope that these works remain on the supermarket shelves and do not find a permanent home in software stores.

Jason Hebert
Portland, OR

Whoops

Some errors were introduced to the review of MicroProse's Master of Magic (January 1995, page 97) during the editing process. Players cannot study and learn all available disciplines, because two of them are diametrically opposed. Also, there are actually 14 wizards and 14 races. Finally, heroes are not necessarily exceptional fighters, as implied by the review.

In the sidebar to "Booking on Game Guides" (January 1995, page 80), we misprinted Prima Publishing's order line. The correct number is 800-255-8989.

Got something you want to get off your chest? Do it! Write, fax, or e-mail us at: Letters to the Editor, c/o Electronic Entertainment, *951 Mariner's Island Blvd., Suite 700, San Mateo, CA 94404; fax: 415-349-7781; Internet address, e2@iftw.com; MCI ID: 619-7340; and CompuServe: 73361, 265.*

ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL WILEY

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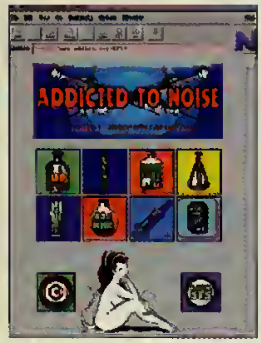
EDGE SHARP

You'll be able to personalize the TEN interface with art and photos.

The Total Entertainment Network will feature a multiplayer version of SimCity.



Hi-fi meets high-tech in Addicted to Noise.

That's Enter-TEN-ment

Warm up your modem and get ready for the **Total Entertainment Network (TEN),** a new online entertainment system due this spring that will include the first multiplayer version of SimCity. Developer Planet Optigon hopes to go beyond the sterility of many online gaming environments by letting users dress up their online profiles with portraits or other graphical elements. Planet Optigon says TEN's offerings will range from simple arcade games to elaborate multiuser dungeons. And just like the big dogs—America Online, Prodigy, and CompuServe (from whom TEN hopes to steal entertainment-hungry users)—TEN will include newsgroups, Internet mail access, chat areas, software libraries, magazines, and news wires. (Planet Optigon; 510-596-8700; not yet priced) *—Bill Meyer*

Platform: PC/Mac
Release Date: Spring

Rockin' On The Net

Rock journalism dives face-first into cyberspace with **Addicted To Noise,** an ambitious online magazine mixing music reviews with sound samples, photography, art, and–eventually–video. Unlike print magazines that spin off online versions, Addicted To Noise is entirely electronic. Fans can access artist profiles and hear 30-second audio quotes from interviews, or they can read album reviews, view cover art, and listen to song excerpts. Addicted To Noise is a collaboration between the Internet Underground Music Archive and *Rolling Stone* contributing editor Michael Goldberg, and promises to deliver articles from the best writers in the business, including Dave Marsh and Steve Leavey. The early lineup includes features on Ry Cooder, John Lennon and Yoko Ono, the Beach Boys, and American Music Club. The publication is free to Internet users and plans to support itself through sponsorships from major and independent record labels. Addicted To Noise's Internet address is: http://www.addict.com/ATN/.

–James Daly

H-P on Your TV

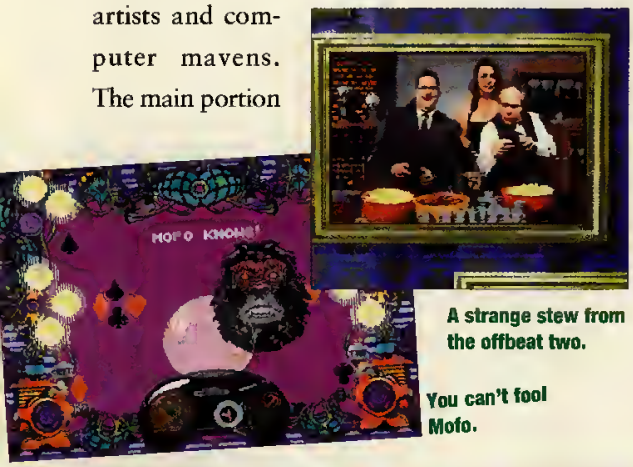
Just because no one you know has interactive TV doesn't mean it doesn't exist. Hewlett-Packard has interactive TV, and it wants to deliver it as soon as someone lays the cable. The company's set-top box, called **The Kayak System,** will first be introduced to select communities by cable giant TCI sometime before the end of this year. When completed, Kayak is expected to support two-way communication between the box and service providers, so users can have electronic program guides, video-on-demand, online shopping, video games, and other services. Kayak will also include MPEG2 video decompression for display of digitally compressed video. H-P is also working on additional components, such as printers, that you could connect to the box to print out show schedules, receipts, coupons, and other information. A future version of Kayak may even include a Microsoft operating system. (Hewlett-Packard; 408-553-2948) *—Christopher Lindquist*

H-P's Kayak won't float until interactive TV hits the mainstream.

More Weirdness From Penn and Teller

Penn and Teller, the reigning hip monarchs of maniacal magic, have broken through to the CD-ROM circuit. Absolute Entertainment is readying the release of **Penn and Teller's Smoke and Mirrors**, a Sega CD that is just what you'd expect from the psycho sleight-of-hand artists and computer mavens. The main portion is an all-out battle between our beloved heroes and some evil magicians (fashioned after a certain flashy tiger-loving duo appearing nightly in Vegas) who want to make people believe that magic is real. Amid cockroaches, clipper shredders, needles, and the like, you must guide Penn and Teller. The disc also includes some sideshow games, including Mofo the Psychic Gorilla, who miraculously guesses the cards in your opponent's hands, and Sun Scorcher, an arcade-style shoot-'em-up. (Absolute Entertainment; 201-818-4800; $54.95)

—Joel C. Enos



A strange stew from the offbeat two.

You can't fool Mofo.

Platform: Sega CD
Available: Spring

Pippin—A New Kind of Apple

ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY LUKBAN

It's the Holy Grail of multimedia—bringing the power of computers and CD-ROMs to the average television set *and* selling people on the idea. Apple Computer will attempt to leapfrog current multimedia players 3DO and Philips' CD-i with its **Pippin** platform, which will bring a quad-speed set-top CD-ROM player to the TV.

The new platform, based on the Macintosh operating system, will run off a PowerPC chip—the heart of the latest line of Macs. Apple says it will court licensees for Pippin and has already signed up Japan's largest toymaker, Bandai, which plans to offer a Pippin-based set-top CD-ROM player called the Power Player for approximately $500 late this year.

Pippin will play slightly modified Mac titles, and Apple estimates that at least 50 titles will be ready by the time the Bandai player hits the market, including ones from Cyan (which brought out the smash Myst), CyberFlix, and Presto Studios. Titles developed specifically for Pippin will also play on the Mac, Apple says.

One early caveat: Although Pippin will support the MPEG standard, the machines will need an additional decoder module to actually play MPEG CD movies. (Apple Computer; 408-996-1010; approximately $500)

—Donald St. John

Platform: Pippin
Ship Date: Late 1995

Here She Is, Ms. Metaverse...

Who needs Atlantic City when you have cyberspace? The **Ms. Metaverse** contest from Virtual Vegas, the folks who brought you the Virtual Vegas Blackjack game, is an interactive virtual beauty pageant held on the Internet.

In this showdown, the contestants don't have to smear Vaseline on their teeth. In fact, they don't even have to be flesh and blood. To enter, contestants can upload a photo, drawing, sound, or video file to Virtual Vegas's World Wide Web home page and answer a wacky questionnaire. The entry can be a man, woman, or any other creature you dream up.

Internet-based judging will begin in June to select finalists, and the winner will snag $10,000 when he or she is crowned at the fall Comdex trade show in the real Las Vegas. You can also vote for who you think should star in Virtual Vegas's first annual Ms. Metaverse CD-ROM and VHS tape, due in April. Virtual Vegas is also working on other titles in its Virtual Vegas lineup (see Game News, page 62). (Virtual Vegas; 310-453-5068; http://www.virtualvegas.com)

–Fredric Paul

The Ms. Metaverse CD-ROM will feature any digital creature you can dream up.

NEWSFLASH

■ He's friendly. He's colorful. And he'll soon be helping out around the house. He's **Bob,** a program due this month from Microsoft that is designed to ease technophobia in neophyte PC users. Bob is made up of eight basic activities, such as letter writing and checkbook balancing, and features an interface that simulates a cozy room in a house. To launch an application in Bob, simply click on a familiar object; to

write letters, for example, you might click on a pad of paper on a desk. Bob also replaces traditional menus with cartoon characters like a dog, a rabbit, and an elephant to interactively guide users through programs. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Windows, $99)

■ Hollywood superagents **Creative Artists Agency** and **Microsoft** have reportedly signed a deal to bring actor **Kevin Costner**—and eventually other stars—to CD-ROM. Kevin Costner's **500 Nations** will be based on the star's CBS miniseries, focusing on native American tribes. The disc is due out this spring. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Win CD, not yet priced)

■ Ready to take a swing at a Nolan Ryan fastball? How about careening down a muddy mountain bike trail? You'll soon be able to do both (sort of) without breaking a sweat, thanks to **SportsLab**, a San Francisco company that will produce interactive multimedia sports centers that tour from

continued on page 14

Payback Time

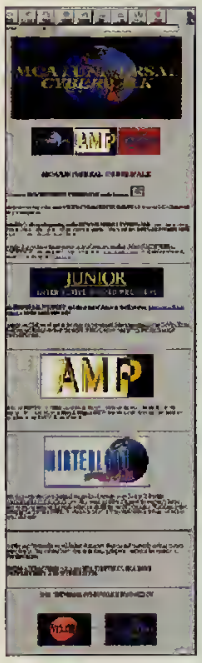
You talkin' to me? Teli Billy Warlock where to go in the interactive big-screen movie *Mr. Payback.*

Do you hate being disappointed by stupid or predictable plot twists when you see a movie? With **Mr. Payback**, you'll have only yourself to blame. The movie is billed by co-producers Sony New Technologies and Interfilm, Inc. as "Hollywood's first interactive movie."

The thriller stars Christopher Lloyd (of *Back To The Future* fame) and Billy Warlock as Mr. Payback, a half-man/half-machine cyborg who hires himself out to people bent on revenge. *Mr. Payback* is playing at some 50 theaters specially wired with a joystick controller at every seat. At critical points in the movie, onscreen graphics announce decision points for Mr. Payback's revenge path; audience members then use the controllers to vote on his actions—including "the ultimate payback" at the end.

The film follows on the heels of Interfilm's short *Ride For Your Life*, which screened last summer using the same technology. *Mr. Payback* was shot on standard 35mm film and transferred to laserdisc for the screening process; Interfilm developed the technology to collect votes and "seamlessly" find the audience's choice on the laserdisc. (Sony New Technologies; 310-449-2100)

—Donald St. John



The MCA/Universal home page gives you the inside skinny on new movies.

The Internet Hits The Flicks

Off-Ramps Online

If you're crazy about cinema, cruising the Internet can be as much fun as heading out to the theater.

With your World Wide Web (WWW) browser, check out the **MCA/Universal Cyberwalk** at http://www.mca.com/ for an update on the latest releases from Universal Pictures. When we visited, the studios were hawking Arnold Schwarzenegger's latest endeavor, *Junior*, with audio and video clips from the film, as well as pictures of celebrity arrivals at the premiere.

More Hollywood hacking can be had at the **Buena Vista Movieplex** at http://bvp.wdp.com/. Disney's Buena Vista Pictures is considerate of Net-surfers with text-only browsers (like Lynx) or slow-speed modem connections. The page offers two interfaces, one packed with heavy graphics and a streamlined version that's just text. Once connected, you can get lists of cast and crew, extensive production notes, and graphics from Buena Vista's latest projects. The Movieplex even has QuickTime movies.

Devotees of classic flicks should consider the **Internet Movie Database** at http://www.cm.cf.ac.uk/Movies/moviequery.html/. This site lets you look up obscure favorites and see cast and crew credits, plot descriptions, notable quotes, flubs in the movie, and more.

If you really like to chat about the world of celluloid, visit some of the movie-related Usenet newsgroups, including **rec.arts.movies** and **rec.arts.movies.reviews**. And for your auditory pleasure, skim the **alt.binaries.sounds.movies** group for strange sound files taken from various films. Cut! That's a wrap. *—Andy Eddy*

You can hear your breath,
your boots pounding on metal stairs.
There's only one way out.
20 more feet...15...10.
You're almost there when suddenly
from out of nowhere
an 8-foot-tall green alien drops down
and lunges at you with a spear, leaving you
approximately .08 seconds to act.

This may be a good time to
mention the superior processing speed
of a Power Macintosh.

For vastly superior game play, arm yourself with a Power Macintosh™ computer. It offers better graphics, smoother animation* and, in some cases, the chance to meet those from cultures intriguingly unlike your own.

Power Macintosh

In fact, games for Power Macintosh are like nothing on this planet. But see for yourself. Call 800-538-9696, and we'll be happy to tell you where you can get into a game. But not, alas, how to get out of it.

Apple

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NEWSFLASH

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city to city this summer. The free-standing centers will feature learning labs and interactive multimedia exhibits representing major sports as well as places where you can learn about sports medicine and nutrition. Funding comes from Electronic Arts and Capital Cities/ABC. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525)

- **7th Level** is joining forces with **Quincy Jones** and **David Salzman's** supremely successful entertainment group, QDE, to form **QD7**, a new company that will concentrate on creating strategy/role-playing games for Windows. QDE has produced such TV hits as *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, while David Salzman was a cofounder of Lorimar Productions (do *Dallas* and *Dynasty* ring a bell?). According to 7th Level CEO George Grayson, QD7 titles will include strong musical scores and will keep gratuitous violence to a minimum. And PCs aren't the only target: QD7 hopes to also spin off game characters for future TV series. (7th Level; 818-547-1955)

- You saw *A River Runs Through It* and you got hooked on fishing. One problem: After buying all that gear, you realized fly-fishing isn't as easy as it seems. Never fear: **Fly Fishing: Great Rivers of the West** from IVI Publishing—which taught you everything you need to know about your body with its Mayo Clinic titles—provides guidance for both expert and novice anglers. You'll learn how to tie your flies and where to find the best spots in the West to wade in for the big ones. Expert commentary from fly-fishing guides adds depth to hundreds of pho-

continued on page 16

Star Talk With Mark Hamill

Mark Hamill: He's back, and once again jetting through the cosmos.

In a crowded New York City hotel room, a familiar voice cuts through the chatter. It's a voice many of us grew up with. It's Luke Skywalker—in real life, Mark Hamill—who stars as Colonel Christopher Blair in Origin's ***Wing Commander III*** *(see review on page 64). He's funny, talkative, and childlike, ducking out during a break to rummage through a Times Square comics shop. Before he left,* Electronic Entertainment *contributor Bernie Yee caught up with him.*

Electronic Entertainment: **How does it feel returning to a genre that made you famous?**

Mark Hamill: It intrigued me, because one of the things I've enjoyed in my career is all the different mediums I've been able to work in. I feel like I always have to do something I haven't done before. (Hamill did voiceover work for the Sierra game Gabriel Knight and served as the voice of the Joker in the *Batman* animated series.)

E²: **How was it adjusting your career after the *Star Wars* blockbusters?**

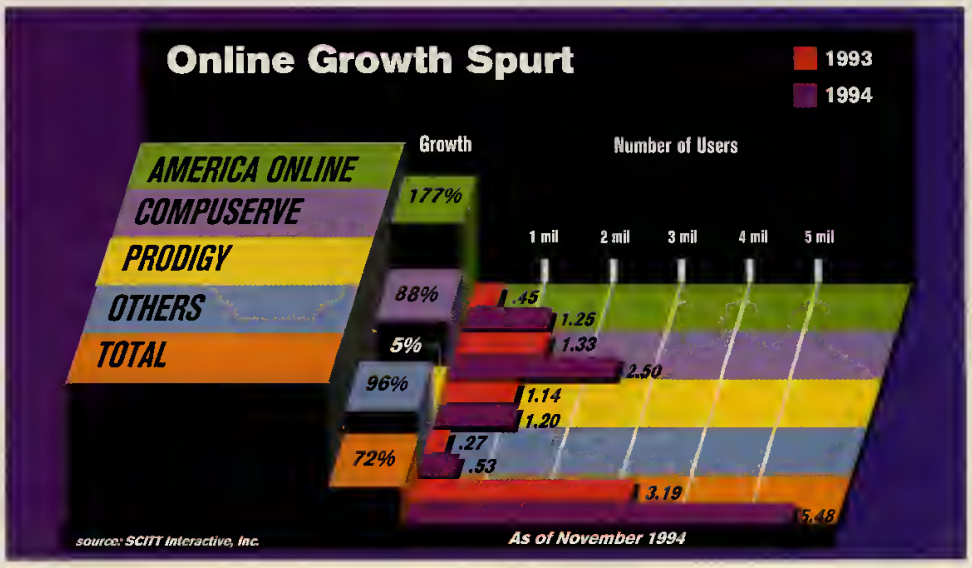
MH: It's difficult to keep your perspective. I credit my family for keeping me sane. I've been married 16 years to the same lady and have three kids. It's unrealistic to think, "Now that I've done the *Star Wars* films, I have to do more blockbusters." I'm able to continually work, even though I have a much lower profile, which really suits me fine.

E²: **Did your experience working in movies with intensive special effects help you in Wing Commander III?**

MH: Oh, absolutely. In George (Lucas)'s movies, I saw every sketch—I never did anything blind where I just look up and they say something big's coming. I'd have to see the model, the drawings, all that.

E²: **Would you do another CD-ROM game?**

MH: Sure—on a case-by-case basis. You know, I looked in the contract and said "What's this crap about Wing Commander 7, 8, 9? This is ridiculous!" I said, "Look, lets do this one and see how it goes. If everyone's happy, we'll do another one." But I'm intrigued, because the possibilities are endless.



There you are, flying through the air
with the greatest of ease when
the air-to-air missile locks on you
and starts homing in. Let it close to 4 miles.
Roll 90 degrees into it and start laying chaff
and flares like crazy. It's still coming.
Keep turning. G forces. Everything's going black.
Turn harder or you're dog meat.
You're dog meat.

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can't do everything.

Games for the Power Macintosh™ computer have better graphics and smoother animation.* Thanks to the sizzling processing speed of the PowerPC™ chip, they also deliver dismally timely, realistic payloads.

Power Macintosh

To find out where you can take a test run, give us a call at 800-538-9696. Then go strap yourself into the cockpit of an F/A-18, and be prepared. The animation won't jump, but you may have to.

Apple

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SHARP EDGE

NEWSFLASH

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tos of monster rivers. You can use the program's slide-show screen-savers to keep the wilds on your mind. Look for it this spring. (IVI Publishing; 800-432-1332; not yet priced)

- **Block Party,** a new chain of entertainment complexes aimed at adults from the Blockbuster Entertainment Group, has opened prototype outlets in Albuquerque and Indianapolis and is readying more. The super stores feature virtual-reality simulations, cutting-edge video games, films, and The Power Grid, a high-tech adult maze. (Blockbuster Entertainment Group; 305-832-3000)
- If you're intrigued by the Internet (and who isn't these days?), get your hands on **The Internet Video**—a start-from-scratch introduction to the 'Net, how it got there, what you need to get on it, and what to do once you are. The $29.95 video doesn't take a make-your-fortune-on-the-Web approach ('Net marketing will be covered in an upcoming title), but it is a slick intro to cyberspace, filled with hot music tracks and animation. (Osprey Film Productions; 310-376-8010)
- Someday soon, the days of multi-disc CD-ROM games may be over. Las Vegas-based **Serotech, Inc.** hopes to put a 15GB compact disc on the market within two years, and eventually plans to boost the storage medium up to a whopping 650GB on one disc—enough to hold 600 feature films. Serotech, a subsidiary of CD-title distributor World Library, has licensed technology from Martin Marietta that enables a modified CD reader's laser to glean information at the molecular level rather than reading carved pits, as on current CDs. (Serotech; 702-873-3734)

The new CD+ format will deliver music for your stereo, plus a whole lot more for your PC.

New Vision For Sound

Technology makes strange bedfellows. The computer and music industries are working together to create enhanced music CDs (sometimes called **CD+**) that work in both computers and stereo systems.

The new discs will display tons of extra stuff—lyrics, videos, interviews with band members, and even games—when run on your PC, but will play just like regular audio CDs on your stereo. Earlier attempts at combining the two formats often required audio players to manually skip the first track—which contained the extra data—or risk frying your speakers.

You'll need a multisession CD-ROM drive and special software drivers from Microsoft to play the CD+ discs under Windows 3.1, but Microsoft plans to build the required technology directly into Windows 95, now scheduled to ship in August. With Windows 95's AutoPlay feature, you'll just drop the disc in the drive and start rocking. Apple has also announced support for the technology.

Several record companies, including Sony Music, Capitol, and Geffen, are already voicing their support for CD+ and have produced test discs starring Bob Dylan, Alice in Chains, and Mariah Carey. The goal is to keep the price close to that of standard audio CDs.

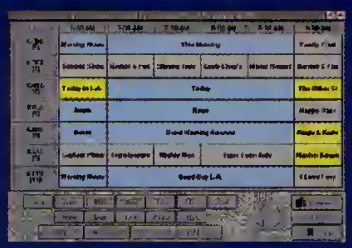
Music publishers and title developers should have the necessary software tools for developing enhanced CDs by later this year.

—Christopher Lindquist

Platform:
Win CD, Mac CD
Ship Date:
Mid- to late 1995

Smart TV

To most people, JBL means speakers–period. But the company's multimedia division is branching out into computer-enhanced television as well. JBL's **Smart TV** technology will let you use your PC to control your entire television experience. The software controls a PC TV board's functions and works with the JBL Interactive TV Program Guide service to give you instant information about what's on for the next week. To keep things simple, you can include only the channels you want in the grid, and the system even comes with a full-function remote control. You can search for interesting shows by category, topic, theme, star, date, and time. Best of all, you can set your VCR to record programs simply by clicking on the show you want in the computer's program grid. JBL is currently testing its system with a number of TV boards, and expects it to begin turning up as a bundled component in both boards and complete PCs sometime this spring. (JBL Multimedia; 408-494-0600) *–Fredric Paul*



JBL's Interactive TV Program Guide lets you just click to watch or record your favorite shows.

Platform: PC
Ship Date: Spring

IT'S NOT IF. IT'S WHEN.

486, Pentium, PowerMac...

No matter how fast your PC is, it can't outrun a power problem

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Just don't have the time for power problems on your PC? Don't worry. They'll always make the time for you. It's not if a power problem will occur, but when. Due to household appliances, poor wiring, bad weather or even other office equipment, power problems are as inevitable as death and taxes.

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In fact, you have better odds of winning the lottery than of escaping the sting of power problems on your PC. One study discovered a typical PC is hit over 100 times a month, causing keyboard lockups, hard drive damage, and worse. And since sags and blackouts represent more than 85% of power problems likely to hit your computer, standard surge suppressors are literally powerless to protect you. And a study in a recent *PCWeek* showed that the largest single cause of data loss is bad power, accounting for almost as much data loss as all other causes combined.

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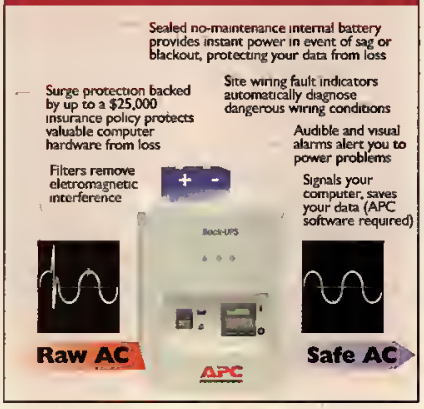
APC UNINTERRUPTIBLE POWER MEANS SAFE DATA, HAPPY COMPUTERS



APC Uninterruptible Power Supplies provide instant battery backup to protect your data from loss and your hard drive from damage. Units are even backed by up to $25,000 in lifetime surge protection insurance.

PROTECT YOURSELF BEFORE YOU KICK YOURSELF...

Get instantaneous battery backup power from an APC Uninterruptible Power Supply and prevent keyboard lockups, data loss, and hard disk crashes. Surge protection performance is even backed by up to a $25,000 Lifetime Equipment Protection Guarantee.

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Starting at just $119, an APC UPS is serious protection no serious computer user should be without.

PC MAGAZINE UK EDITORS' CHOICE

PC World Top 20 Upgrade

"Don't take chances...get the ultimate protection... from APC."--PCWorld

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Carol Irvine, Wizard Assoc.

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"Our server was running a project when it lost power.. messed up all the data files. It took four days to recover. But we don't worry anymore since we got APC.."
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Ravi Iyer, Software Galleria

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Kurt Roemer, Searle Corp.

"Power went out while processing payroll! If not for APC we would have had a walkout!"
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Home office user Don Traux knows first hand about APC reliability. "It ought to be against the law to buy a computer without an APC Back-UPS 350. I recently had a direct lightning hit right outside the house..my computer never blinked."

"APC lets me sleep better at night. How much would you pay to get back that one file you worked all day to complete for the boss who gets on the plane at 8:00 a.m? You should assume that you'll buy a UPS, not that it's some luxury item."
R. Morella, Westinghouse

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Craig Post, Comm. Tech

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S. Foreman, LSP

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Leader Board

The best-selling PC, Mac, and CD-ROM entertainment software

MicroProse's Master of Magic steals fifth place from SimCity 2000 on the PC Games list.

Star Trek: The Next Generation Interactive Technical Manual debuts in fifth place on the Mac board.

Doom II takes command of the No. 1 spot on the PC Games and CD-ROM Titles lists.

The Leader Board is a compilation of top-selling software in 1,300 retail stores for October 1994. Some titles may appear in more than one category. Source: PC Data.

PC GAMES

1 **Doom II** The hair-raising sequel to Doom has more than 30 levels of mayhem, seven new creatures, and a super shotgun for lots of unfriendly fire. (GT Interactive, 800-332-4300, DDS CD, $69.95)

2 **Myst** Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and logical solutions keep this unique adventure game high atop the Leader Board. (Brøderbund Software, 800-521-6263; Win CD, street price $55)

3 **5 ft. 10 Pak, Volume Two** The second bargain-priced ten-disc compilation of games and multimedia titles, including Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective and BattleChess Enhanced. (Sinus Publishing, 800-247-0307, DOS CD/Win CD, street price $30)

4 **5 ft. 10 Pak, Volume One** The original bargain disc set of games and multimedia titles, including Doom, Episode 1; King's Quest V; and *Time* Man of the Year. (Sinus Publishing; 800-247-0307; DOS CD/Win CD, street price $30)

5 **Master of Magic** Choose from 14 wizards and 210 spells in a struggle for control of Arcanus in the fantasy-world successor to Master of Dnon. (MicroProse; 800-879-7529; DOS, $59.95)

6 **Sid Meier's Colonization** Set sail in 1500 A.D. to settle the New World. Choose your colony locations, founding fathers, and modes of production as you set the course of a new nation. (MicroProse; 800-579-7529; DDS, $59.95)

7 **Microsoft Space Simulator** Take part in historical missions such as the Apollo 17 trip to the moon, stroll through the outer reaches of space, or get intimate with the stars from a real observatory. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; DOS, $49.95)

8 **TIE Fighter** In this *Star Wars* adventure, you no longer fly for the rebels. This time, you're out to do Darth Vader's bidding. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927, DOS, $59.95)

9 **SimCity 2000** Build your city of the future with this improved version of the classic urban-simulation game. (Maxis; 800-336-2947; DDS/Windows, $69.95)

10 **The 7th Guest** The ghost of Henry Stauf just won't go away in this realistic and haunting puzzler. (Virgin Interactive Entertainment; 800-874-4607; DOS CD, street price $54.95-$64.95)

MAC GAMES

1 **Myst** Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and logical solutions keep this unique adventure game atop the Mac list. (Brøderbund Software; 800-521-6263; Mac CD, street price $55)

2 **Rebel Assault** Intense 3-D graphics and furious action highlight this *Star Wars* action/adventure. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; Mac CD, $49.95)

3 **SimCity 2000** Build your city of the future with this improved version of the classic urban-simulation game. (Maxis; 800-336-2947; Mac, $69.95)

4 **Links Pro Macintosh** Photo-realistic courses and players as well as humorous sound bites highlight this ground-breaking golf game. (Access Software; 800-793-0073, Mac, $69.95)

5 **Star Trek: The Next Generation Interactive Technical Manual** Check out a hand phaser, sit in the Captain's chair, and examine Picard's jammies as you wander the halls, cabins, and decks of the *Enterprise*. (Simon & Schuster Interactive; 800-983-5333; Mac CD, $69.95)

CD-ROM TITLES

1 **Doom II** The hair-raising sequel to Doom has more than 30 levels of mayhem, seven new creatures, and a super shotgun for lots of unfriendly fire. (GT Interactive, 800-332-4300; DDS CD, $69.95)

2 **Myst** Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and logical solutions keep this unique adventure game high atop the Leader Board. (Brøderbund Software; 800-521-6263; Win CD/Mac CD, street price $55)

3 **5 ft. 10 Pak, Volume Two** The second bargain-priced ten-disc compilation of games and multimedia titles, including Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective and the Home Medical Advisor. (Sinus Publishing; 800-247-0307; DOS CD/Win CD, street price $30)

4 **Quicken CD-ROM Deluxe** The popular home finance program for managing your money moves to CD-RDM and debuts at No. 4. (Intuit; 800-624-9060; Win CD, $49.95)

5 **5 ft. 10 Pak, Volume One** The original bargain disc set of games and multimedia titles, including Doom, Episode 1; King's Quest V; and *Time* Man of the Year. (Sinus Publishing, 800-247-0307, DOS CD/Win CD, street price $30)

6 **The Print Shop Deluxe CD Ensemble** Five easy-to-use desktop publishing applications bundled on one disc. (Brøderbund Software; 800-521-6263; Win CD/Mac CD, $79.95)

7 **Microsoft Encarta** Experience the world through videos, audio clips, animations, and text in this high-tech encyclopedia. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400, Win CD/Mac CD, $99.95)

8 **Corel Gallery** Ten thousand pieces of professional clip art on a single CD. (Corel; 800-772-6735; Win CD/Mac CD, $59)

9 **The 7th Guest** The ghost of Henry Stauf won't go away in this realistic and haunting puzzler. (Virgin Interactive Entertainment; 800-874-4607; DDS CD/Mac CD/CD-i, street price $54.95-$64.95)

10 **Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia '95** The entire Compton's Encyclopedia on CD-ROM, with more than 35,000 articles, 16 hours of audio, 8,000 photos, 48 slide shows, and 31 videos. (Compton's NewMedia; 800-862-2206; Win CD/Mac CD, street price $79)

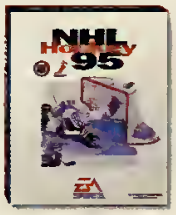
Announcing Columbia House CD-ROM Direct.
Everything from games to reference to "real-world" entertainment.

Rebel Assault
Arcade Game 5007000
DOS | 386 | 4mb | M | J
MAC | LCII | | K |

Where In The World Is Carmen Sandiego Deluxe
Children's Ed 5016605
WIN | 386 | 4mb | M
MAC | Class | | |

Microsoft Musical Instruments
Music 5012802
WIN | 386 | 4mb | M
MAC | LCII | | |

Myst
Interact Game 5004304
WIN | 386/33 | 4mb | M
MAC | Class | | |



NHL Hockey 95
Sports 5007505
DOS | 386/33 | 4mb | M | J
| | | | K |

Guinness Disc Of Records
General Interest 5009204
WIN | 386 | 4mb | M
MAC | LCII | | |

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How To Select CD-ROMs For Your System.

WIN	386	4mb	M	J
MAC	LCIII		K	P
SYSTEM	CPU	RAM	PERIPH.	

SYSTEM Button indicates the available operating environment(s) for a given selection DOS (for PC), Windows (for PC), Macintosh

CPU Button indicates the *minimum* processor required If a title is available in PC and Macintosh formats, the top half of this button represents PC system requirements and the bottom half represents Macintosh system requirements Note Ser =Series, Class =Classic, Pent =Pentium For Mac – LC series includes LC 475, Performa 475, Quadra, Centris, Powerbook 180C, IIFX or better

RAM Button indicates the *minimum* amount of RAM required

PERIPHERALS Button indicates required peripherals M=mouse, J=joystick, K=keyboard, P=printer

For all titles, the *minimum* system requirements recommended (unless otherwise indicated) are Hardware SVGA monitor (256 colors), sound card, 40MB hard drive, double speed CD-ROM drive Operating System DOS 5 0, Windows 3 1, Macintosh System 7 0

Leonardo
Historical 5020003
WIN | 386 | 4mb | M
MAC | LCII | | |

Armored Fist
Arcade Game 5022405
DOS | 386/40 | 4mb | M | J
| | | | K |

MacMillan Dictionary For Children
Children's Ed 5019005
WIN | 386 | 4mb | M
MAC | LCII | 5mb | K | P

Parenting
Home/Personal 5010905
WIN | 386 | 4mb | M
| | | | P

Alge Blaster 3
Children's Ed 5019203
WIN | 386 | 4mb | M
| | | | K

The New Kid Dn The Block
Children's Ed 5018304
WIN | 386 | 4mb | M
MAC | LCII | | K

The 7th Guest
Interact Game 5004700
WIN | 386/33 | 4mb | M
MAC | LCIII | | |

Inherit The Earth
Advent Game 5002100
DOS | 386 | 4mb | M
MAC | LCIII | | K

Microsoft Bookshelf
General Ref 5009402
WIN | 386 | 4mb | M
MAC | LCII | | |

System Shock Enhanced
Arcade Game 5022900
DOS | 386/40 | 4mb | M | J
| | | | K |

AAA Travel Planner
Travel 5011606
WIN | 386 | 4mb | M
| | | | P

The Residents: Freak Show
Music 5013909
WIN | 386 | 4mb | M
MAC | LCII | | |

Doom II
Arcade Game 5021506
DOS | 386/33 | 4mb | M | J
| | | | K |

Aegis-Guardian Of The Fleet
Naval Simulation 5001102
DOS | 386 | 4mb | M
| | | | K |

Wines Of The World
Home/Personal 5011101
WIN | 386 | 4mb | M
MAC | Class | | K

Peter Gabriel: Explora 1
Music 5013404
| | | | M
MAC | Class | 4mb | K

Prehistoria
Historical 5009105
WIN | 386 | 4mb | M
MAC | LCII | | |

Front Page Sports Baseball
Sports 5007406
DOS | 386 | 4mb | M | J
| | | | K |

Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing
Typing Tutor 5015102
WIN | 286 | 640K | M
| | | | K

Ruff's Bone
Children's Ed 5018403
WIN | 386 | 4mb | M
MAC | LCII | | K

Dark Legions
Strategy Game 5008404
DOS | 386 | 4mb | M
| | | | K

Corel Gallery
Clip Art Library 5010301
WIN | 386 | 2mb | M
| | | K | P

Chaos Continuum
Advent Game 5003702
WIN | 486 | 8mb | M

Police Quest: Open Season
Advent Game 5002803
DOS | 386 | 4mb | M
| | | | K

Nascar Racing
Driving Simul 5001300
DOS | 386/40 | 8mb | M | J
| | | | K |

X-Com
Strategy Game 5008602
DOS | 386 | 4mb | M
| | | | K

Sam & Max
Advent Game 5001808
DOS | 386/33 | 4mb | M
| | | | K

Bodyworks Voyager
Medical Ref 5009709
WIN | 386 | 4mb | M
| | | | P

Armada/Wing Commander
Flight Simulation 5000807
DOS | 386/33 | 4mb | M | J
| | | | K |

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...in Super VGA...a lightning fast mul-
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...seen on any platform.

...are placing tec...
...damental gameplay, it is
...hat at least one design
...n to put the 'interac-
...ultimedia gaming.

...rn out to ...
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...ore is
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...to
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...ystematical y...
...dventure/role play...
...ion into a ...D enviro...
...aintaining the conve...
...genre in detail.

...n a year where it appears many
...evelopers are placing technology
...ahead of fundamental gameplay, it is
...nice to see that at least one design
...hasn't forgotten to put the 'interac-
...tive' back into multimedia gaming.

...renaline start pu...
...early on, with a shocking start to
...your long quest.

...any platfo... ...no ques...
...of the most
...f the year.

...s Dragon Lore have
...e that so many 'co...
...ns' lacked? From wh...
...n, the answer is a resoundi...

...go...
...from the new generation of designs
...which uses new technology subtly
...and in more than one obvious
...way....Dragon Lore is the first design
...out there to take the formula for a
...regular top-down RPG or adventure,
...and use it in a 3-D first-person envi-
...ronment.

...seen

...as the prelimina...
...been playing, there
...question that it will
...he most talked-about

...Dr...
...son...
...This...
...oper...
...still ...
...story,...

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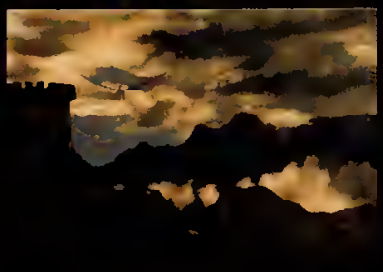
Raise your sword to destroy your enemies, or attempt to solve the gruesome challenges in a more intelligent way. You decide.

Beyond technically amazing, the game play will keep you devoted to conquering the unleashed evil.



Sound effects laced with grisly screams keep you riveted to the action.

In a quiet valley protected by the DragonKnights, your father has been murdered by a traitorous knight who has vowed to destroy your family. Now you must regain your legacy and seek vengeance. Awaiting you are magic spells, vicious combat, intriguing puzzles, and sinister creatures that dwell in this lost domain. There's never been anything like it. For centuries. Only the new Mindscape® could do it this well.

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Formats 3DO™ and IBM® CD System Requirements For IBM CD ROM • IBM 386 MHZ (486 recommended) • 4 MB of memory • MCGA or VGA (256 color) graphics card • MS DOS 5.0 or higher • Hard Disk • CD ROM drive 150 KB second transfer rate minimum (double speed recommended) • Mouse required • Sound Card (Sound Blaster®, Adlib®, Pro Audio™ Spectrum, LAPC-1) Copyright© 1995 Cryo Interactive Entertainment All rights reserved Copyright© 1995 Mindscape Inc All rights reserved Dragon Lore is a trademark of Mindscape, Inc. 3DO, the 3DO logos and the Interactive Multiplayer are trademarks of the 3DO Company. IBM is a registered trademark of International Business Machines Corporation All rights reserved All other product names are the trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective holders and are hereby acknowledged

Spotlight

PHOTOGRAPHS BY WEINBERG & CLARK

The Advantage Adventure doesn't do TV, but it has more RAM and a higher-performance CPU.

EASY DOES IT

All-In-One Multimedia

PC makers looking to create easy-to-use computers are turning to "all-in-one" systems. These consumer-oriented systems stuff a single box with everything you need to get multimedia games and titles up and running without setup hassles. All you have to do to start one up is plug it in and turn it on.

Compaq and AST are two of the first companies to enter the all-in-one fray. Both the Compaq Presario CDTV 520 Model 420 and the AST Advantage Adventure 4066d are simple to set up and use. But because they pack so much into a tight space, these one-piece machines have little room to add extra boards or drives. You're stuck with the built-in 14-inch monitors, neither the Compaq nor the AST has an external monitor port or an available VESA local bus slot.

Compaq Presario CDTV 520 Model 420

This machine made quite a splash when it was introduced late last year. The 486SX2/66-based Presario has all the standard multimedia components: double-speed CD-ROM drive, integrated 16-bit sound, local-bus graphics, built-in speakers, 4MB of RAM (upgradable to 64MB), and a 420MB hard drive (upgradable to 525MB). The built-in telecommunications system serves quadruple duty as a speakerphone, fax machine, modem, and answering machine. You also get a preinstalled card that lets the Presario CDTV work as a small television set and video screen grabber. Heck, it's even cable-ready.

Compaq doesn't skimp on the software, either. It bundles more than two dozen titles, including Compaq's TabWorks interface software, Microsoft Works for Windows, Microsoft Encarta, Quicken, and the Home Survival Toolkit—all for less than $1,900. (Compaq; 800-345-1518; street price, $1,899)

AST Advantage Adventure 4066d

AST takes a slightly different approach. There's no TV or speakerphone, but you get a more powerful 486DX2/66 processor, 8MB of RAM instead of 4MB, and slightly better graphics performance (up to 1024-x-768 at 256 colors vs. Compaq's 16 colors). You also get a pair of 16-bit expansion slots, but like the Compaq, one of the slots is half-length, meaning you'll be hard-pressed to find cards that will fit.

AST bundles 14 software packages, including the AST Works Windows interface, Microsoft Encarta, Quicken, Microsoft Golf, and Lotus Organizer. The whole package is yours for about $100 less than the Compaq.

AST plans to release an improved version of the Advantage Adventure that will feature a quad-speed CD-ROM drive and a larger hard drive—at no extra cost. (AST; 800-876-4278; street price, $1,799)

—Christopher Lindquist

Compaq's Presario CDTV 520 also works as a TV set and a telecommunications system.

Compaq Presario CDTV 520 Model 420
Platform: PC
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

AST Advantage Adventure 4066d
Platform: PC
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

The Discs They Are A-Changin'

Step into Dylan's dressing room at his 30th anniversary concert.

He's not young, he looks terrible, and he can't sing. But Bob Dylan remains the pre-eminent voice of a generation. **Highway 61 Interactive** delivers a multimedia look at Dylan's life and times from his salad days in Greenwich Village coffeehouses in the early '60s to his most recent works.

Created by Graphix Zone, the team behind last year's ☥ Interactive (featuring "the artist formerly known as Prince"), Highway 61 uses materials provided by Columbia Records. There are 10 full-length songs, including an early electric version of "House of the Rising Sun" and even a couple of rare high-school recordings; four complete videos (featuring unreleased footage of Dylan's engagement at New York City's Supper Club in November 1993); and clips, snippets and outtakes from dozens of other works. You also get lyrics from all the songs on Dylan's 41 albums, lists of cover artists, rare photos and drawings, plus lots more.

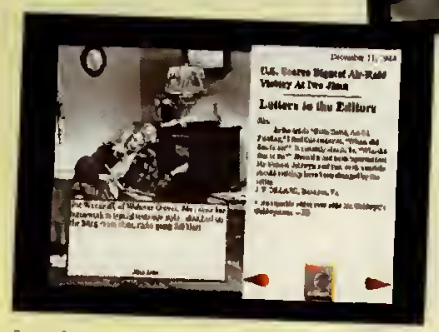
You can explore the disc through eight beautifully rendered environments, including Manhattan's Folk City club, Dylan's original Columbia recording studio, and backstage at his 1992 gala 30th Anniversary concert at Madison Square Garden. But unlike the sometimes frustrating ☥ title, you can also go directly to the material that interests you. Dylan fans and closet folkies are sure to love the trip. (Graphix Zone; 800-828-3838; $59.95) *—Fredric Paul*

Format: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

That's LIFE

From its first appearance on the newsstands in 1936, *LIFE* magazine has helped reflect and shape the lives of several generations. Creative Multimedia's **The Face of *LIFE*** showcases the magazine's classic images, top photo essays, year-end *Billboard* charts, and other newsworthy items from 1936 through 1972.

The big issues and names in 1970.



A reader takes movie mogul Samuel Goldwyn to task. The editor sets him straight.

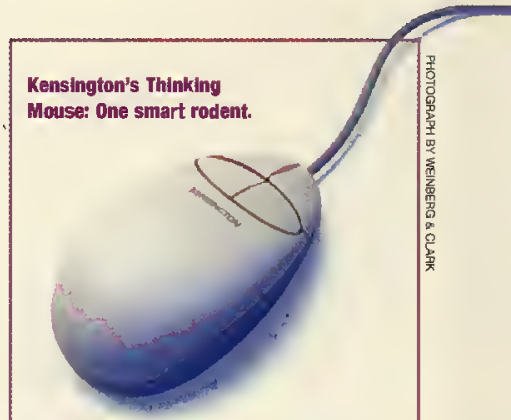
The program's interface places you at the Editor's Desk, which is strewn with photographs, a radio, a typewriter that makes realistic typing sounds, an advertising portfolio, a pair of glasses, and an open copy of the publication; click on each to open a different part of the program. The items change appearance, depending on which year you select.

You can leaf through *LIFE*'s photo coverage of the two World Wars and the Vietnam War, including the unforgettable photo-essay, "One Week's Dead," that documented the 242 men lost to war between May 28 and June 3 of 1969.

Music fans can check out the Billboard Top 10 for each year and reminisce about the days when Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters reigned supreme (1944) or Simon and Garfunkel topped the charts with *Bridge Over Troubled Water* (1970). Each year also features a song of the times and newsreel footage of one of the year's big events.

The Face of *LIFE* makes looking back a visual treat. (Creative Multimedia; 503-241-4351; $29.99) *—Joel Enos*

Platform: Win CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★



Kensington's Thinking Mouse: One smart rodent.

PHOTOGRAPH BY WEINBERG & CLARK

A Mouse That Roars

It's time for your old mouse to crawl back into its hole. **Kensington's Thinking Mouse**, which continues the company's tradition of high-quality computer peripherals, is a four-button model that you can configure to perform macros or to pop up menus of common commands, in addition to its standard click-and-drag routine. The software also lets you configure the mouse's "acceleration curve"—the rate at which the mouse cursor speeds up on-screen as you move the unit. The mouse's smooth, narrowed-oval shape fits comfortably in hands of all sizes, and the non-slip rubberized sides provide a solid grip. This is a rodent to be reckoned with. (Kensington; 800-535-4242; street price: Mac, $99.95; PC serial, $89.95; PC bus, $119.95) *—Christopher Lindquist*

Platform: PC, Mac
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Spotlight

BLACK HOLES

A Brief History

If you've ever wondered about black holes, alternate dimensions, and quarks, then gaze into Blasterware's **A Brief History of Time: An Interactive Journey,** the CD-ROM version of Stephen W. Hawking's amazing bestseller of the same name. The title lightens the mass of some dense material—like the origin of the universe—with an atmosphere of multimedia razzle-dazzle. Interactive graphics, movies, animation, and the book's complete text combine to make quantum physics and cosmology not only understandable but fun.

Your guide in this fascinating exploration is an animated version of Professor Stephen W. Hawking, truly a character of great interest. A victim of the wasting (and eventually fatal) Motor Neuron Disease, Hawking has been confined for many years to a wheelchair and can communicate only by using a device that recognizes his tiny movements and text selections and translates them into the flat, computer-generated speech that narrates this title. Despite his body limitations, Hawking possesses a mind on par with Einstein's and a sense of humor that truly transcends his condition.

So buckle your seatbelt as you journey to the edge of the universe, get trapped in a black hole, roam through the subatomic landscape of Quarkland, and get to know this remarkable man, too. (Creative Labs; 800-998-5227; $49.95)

—Anthony Lukban

Platform: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Tickling the Electronic Ivories

PHOTOGRAPH BY WEINBERG & CLARK

Learn to play with the MusicStar.

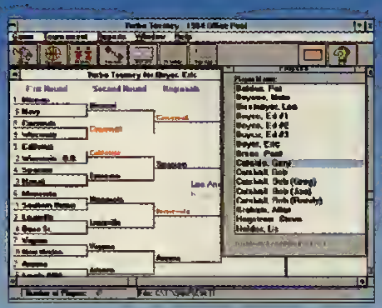
Turn your PC into an electronic music machine with Reveal's MusicStar keyboard and software. Setup is relatively simple—a blessing, since Reveal's technical support is not quite up to snuff. Just plug the keyboard into your sound card's MIDI port and install the software. MusicStar provides background on the classical greats, a series of lessons, and all the tools you need to become a musical legend in your own time. (Reveal; 800-738-3251; $99) *—Ann M. Marcus*

Platform: Windows/Win CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★

March Madness

For fans of college basketball, life peaks every March during the NCAA Basketball Tournament. The office pool dominates the conversation at water coolers around the nation. While trying your hand at a NCAA pool is always great fun, managing one is almost always a time-consuming drag. Turbo Tourney 2.0 can help: This basic Windows program makes it easy to enter pairings and player choices, assign scoring options, calculate standings, and print reports to keep up interest. Just don't let the Feds get wind of it if there's money involved. (Sideline Software; 515-264-1210; $24.95)

—Fredric Paul



Turbo Tourney makes managing the office basketball pool fun and easy.

Platform: Windows
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

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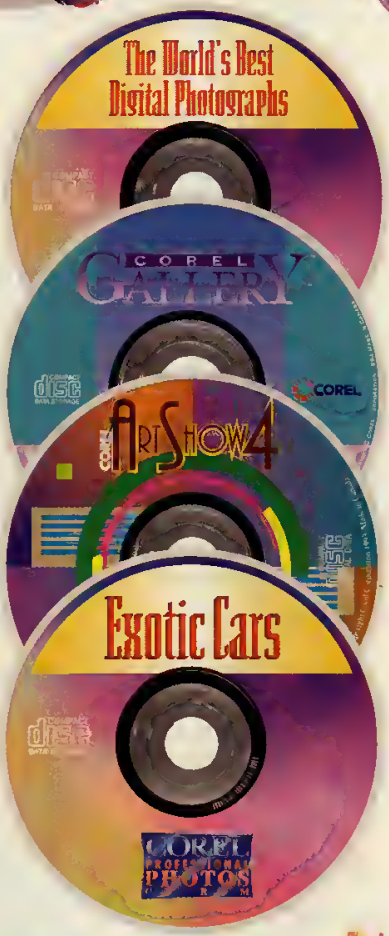

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Spotlight

WINNERS AND LOSERS

Sports Snorts

Even if you *are* a Gilbert Gottfried fan, you won't want to see him floundering in Great Bear Software's **SportzFreakz**. It's possibly the most irritating multimedia title you'll ever see, suffering from grainy video, inane sports trivia jokes, and ridiculous fighting animations. The worst part is, it's not funny. (Great Bear; 800-795-4325; $34.95.)

Sports Shorts is about fun and games.

By contrast, Time Warner Interactive's **Sport Shorts** is a winner. Despite the quarter-screen-sized videos, the interface—also used in Time Warner's other comedy titles—is engaging, and the skits by male and female comedians from the Comedy Central cable channel's programs, such as *The A-List*, consistently hit the mark. Watch almost 50 comics—including John Caponera, Kim Coles, and Adam Sandler—score on just about every sport-related subject imaginable, from cheerleading to body checking. (Time Warner Interactive; 800-482-3766; $19.95) *–Bill Meyer*

SportzFreakz
Platform: Win CD
Rating: ★

Sports Shorts
Platform: Win CD/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

A Disc Full Of Bruises

A Cowboy's worst nightmare, courtesy of Turner Interactive's NFL's Greatest Plays.

If you live for the pregame shows on Sunday afternoons, you'll love **NFL's Greatest Plays** from Turner Interactive. Produced in conjunction with NFL Films, the disc compiles 75 of the most exciting plays in professional football history.

Search the action by date, team, or player, or flip through 'em all, from No. 1, The Immaculate Reception, to No. 75, the Cleveland Browns' 1970 victory over the New York Jets in the inaugural telecast of ABC Monday Night Football. Many plays let you watch the action from several different camera angles, or even as computer-animated Xs and Os. And if the video itself doesn't make clear why the play is a classic, a text explanation helps set the stage. (Turner Interactive; 800-294-0022; street price less than $50)

–Christopher Lindquist

Platform: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ½

Screen Saver Mania

FanTaSee Screen Savers for Windows fills your screen with the stylized images of California artist Paul Culp. His sword-wielding goblins, scantily clad fairies, and other assorted beasts and beauties are reminiscent of old-fashioned dime sci-fi novel covers. (Discus; 800-704-0004; $29.95)

Platform: Windows
Rating: ★ ★ ★

Find out what's up with that dam cat in Delrina's Opus 'n' Bill On the Road Again. This zany screen saver's 16 animated modules feature Outland's dynamic ding-a-lings engaged in all sorts of politically incorrect hi-jinks, courtesy of bad boy cartoonist Berkeley Breathed. (Delrina; 800-315-5849; $39.95)

Platform: Windows/Mac
Rating: ★ ★ ★

Rod Serling's voice is one of the most haunting, evocative icons of America's television culture. Sound Source Interactive's The Twilight Zone Screen Saver brings that famous voice to your PC along with video animation of Serling's opening soliloquy, 75 other sound bites, and more than 100 stills from the cult-favorite sci-fi series. (Sound Source Interactive; 800-877-4778; *$19.95*)

Platform: Windows/Win CD
Rating ★ ★ ★ ★

Nice set of choppers! This ferocious great white is just one of the 22 sharks that make guest appearances in Expert Software's Sharks! Screen Saver. You can view them individually, create a slide show of these gruesome toothsomes, or set up your favorite image as Windows wallpaper. (Expert Software; 800-759-2562; $14.95)

Platform: Windows
Rating: ★ ★ ★

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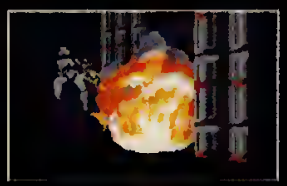

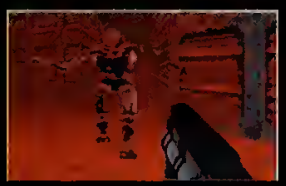

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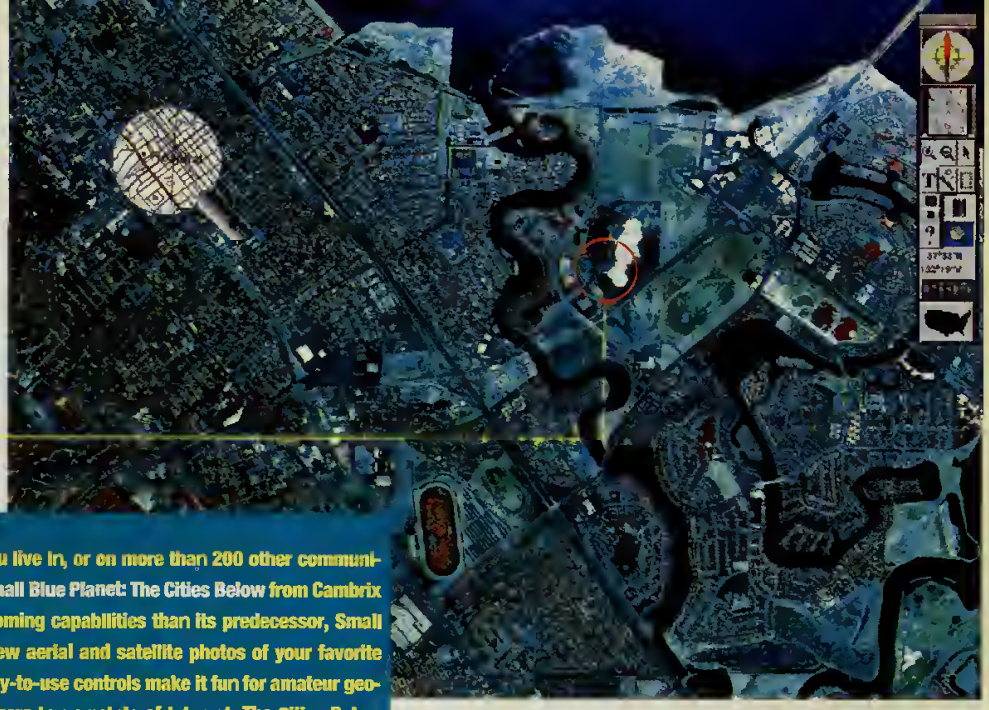
Spotlight



HIGHER THAN A KITE

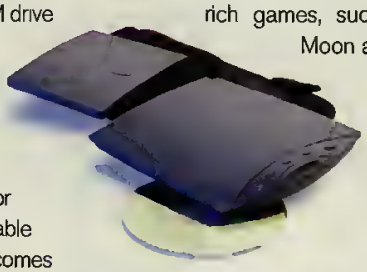
Bird's Eye View

For a new perspective on the city you live in, or on more than 200 other communities across the nation, check out Small Blue Planet: The Cities Below from Cambrix Publishing. This version includes better zooming capabilities than its predecessor, Small Blue Planet: Real Picture Atlas. You can view aerial and satellite photos of your favorite metropolis' roads, rivers, and buildings. Easy-to-use controls make it fun for amateur geographers to zoom around the country and zero in on points of interest. The Cities Below disc served up this 1982 shot of the site where the E^2 offices were subsequently built in San Mateo, Calif. (Cambrix Publishing; 800-992-8781; $49.95) *—Fredric Paul*

Platform: Mac/Win CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★

Taking a Spin Around Reno

NEC doesn't have a lock on the portable CD-ROM drive market anymore. Struggling firm Media Vision has jumped in with its sharp-looking **Reno**. This go-anywhere double-speed drive works with either PCs or Macs and doubles as a portable CD audio player. It even comes with a cleverly-designed carrying case that will accommodate the unit with or without the SCSI docking attachment.



Media Vision's Reno is a smooth drive with a steep price.

Reno was designed with easy installation in mind. It features a clearly illustrated quick-start manual that walks you through everything from installing a SCSI connection card (although one is not included in the box) to attaching the drive to your home stereo system. If you get stuck, Media Vision's toll-free support technicians are available seven days a week to answer your questions.

While a double-speed CD-ROM drive may not keep pace with the fastest of today's quad-speed wonders, Reno's 180 millisecond access speed proved more than adequate for running even the most video-rich games, such as Under a Killing Moon and Blown Away.

Despite its snazzy profile, however, Reno's materials and construction seem a bit flimsy. Another mark against it is the price—almost $350 if you pay full retail, although you can find it for as little as $270 if you look around. That's still $150-$200 more than the least expensive double-speed drives on the market, and close to street price for even some internal quad-speed CD-ROM drives. So unless portability is paramount, Reno may not be a winning bet. (Media Vision; 800-845-5870; $349)

—Christopher Lindquist

Platform: PC/Mac
Rating: ★ ★ ★

PHOTOGRAPH BY WEINBERG & CLARK

CompuServe On Disc

CompuServe is a gold mine of information. But sometimes all that digging can get costly. **CompuServeCD** is the bimonthly companion that can save you online charges by providing offline access to lots of information that doesn't change very often. There are also tools and hints for efficient use of the service. Each month's disc features magazine-style articles, including movie previews, travel adventures, and even interviews with celebrities. (CompuServe; 800-337-6689; $7.95/month subscription)

—Ann M. Marcus

Platform: Win CD/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

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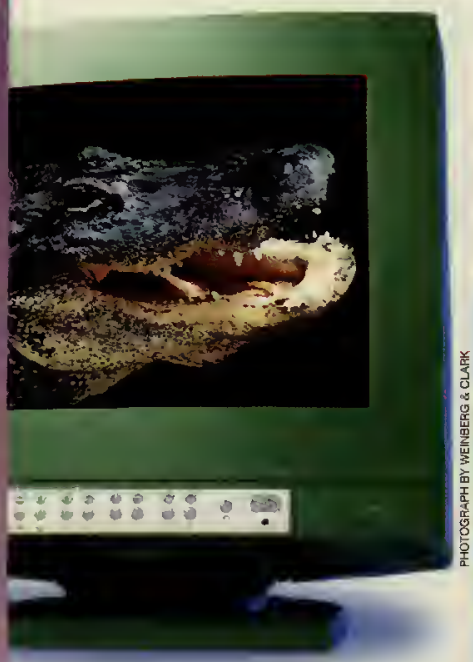
Spotlight

A TOUCH OF COLOR



PHOTOGRAPH BY WEINBERG & CLARK

Mean Green

Nokia gives the term "color monitor" new meaning with its latest line of 17-inch multimedia monitors. The Valuegraph 447L comes in green, red, blue, or charcoal to add instant style to your system. There is standard computer "griege" for you conservatives, too. The front panel controls make it easy to tweak the screen settings and adjust the volume of the built-in stereo speakers. Should we expect stripes, plaids, and florals next? (Nokia; 800-296-6542; $699)

—Ann M. Marcus

Platform: PC/Mac
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Getting in a Housing Fix

Simply House helps you make dozens of common home repairs.

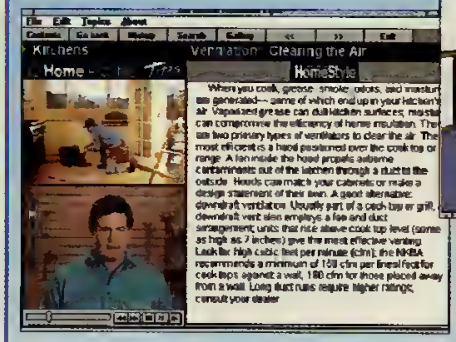
You say do-it-yourself home repair isn't entertaining? You'll change your tune the first time you have to hatch the family nest egg to hire a home repair expert. Instead, train yourself to make the repairs with **Simply House**, a CD-ROM home repair guide from 4Home Productions.

Simply House provides tips and step-by-step illustrated solutions for hundreds of common household repairs, from de-squeaking your stairs to finishing a basement. To find information, you can wander through the "virtual house" and click on the objects you want to fix, select specific rooms from the blueprint, or search for a word that describes your problem. Real beginners can even learn the basics—driving nails, sanding a new wood floor, using a saw. All the money you save can buy you something terrifically entertaining. (4Home Productions; 800-773-5445; $44.95)

—Christopher Lindquist

Platform: Win CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Architect On A Disc



Find out what to do from the star of The Learning Channel's Home Pro show.

The CD-ROM Edition of 3D Home Architect includes hundreds of new plans, furniture pieces, and appliances.

Bringing a successful floppy-based program to CD-ROM has its pluses and minuses. **3D Home Architect** CD-ROM Edition illustrates both sides of the equation.

On the plus side, the CD-ROM makes room for 200 new furniture and fixture objects (for a total of 400) and 100 more sample house plans (to bring the number up to 150). You can also display your plans in three dimensions, so you'll get a much better idea of how the finished project will look.

Less successful is the separate Tips module, which can be launched from the main program but is not well integrated with it. You'll get ideas from more than 100 searchable articles drawn from *American HomeStyle* magazine and 50 video clips of Gerry Connell, "The Home Pro" from The Learning Channel cable network (check out his colorful assortment of sport shirts). But you can't directly access those tips appropriate to the plan you're working on, and the instructions are by no means comprehensive. In fact, some of the points are obvious, silly, or even misleading.

3D Home Architect is a fine tool for getting your dream house ideas (or your major renovations) down in blue and white, but it's certainly no substitute for the services of a professional architect or designer. (Broderbund Software; 800-521-6263; street price $70)

—Fredric Paul and Pamela Robinson

Format: Win CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ½

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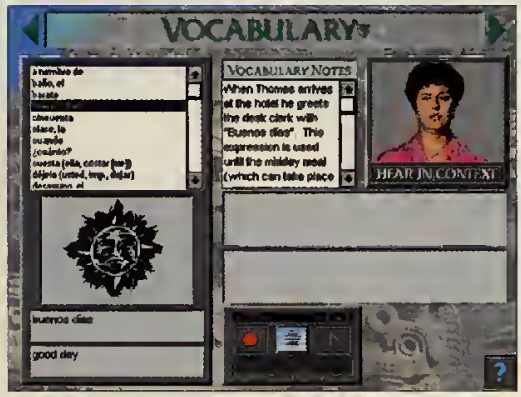
Spotlight

BUENOS DIAS

Learning Spanish

Sierra On-Line's Berlitz Live! Spanish takes you on a colorful tour of the Spanish language.

Berlitz Live! Spanish from Sierra On-Line is a slick, colorful affair, with voice-synched animated characters who walk you through such topics as arriving at your destination, eating out, hotel issues, and basic expressions. You can join conversations, record and compare your pronunciation to the teacher's, and quiz yourself. The Mexico City Adventure game takes you on a frenetic bus ride that ends at the airport, but only if you can answer all the questions correctly. The dictionary lets you look up words in either English or Spanish using a word list, but you can't type in the words you want to translate. (Sierra On-Line; 800-757-7707, $134.95)



Serious students will appreciate the depth and structure of HyperGlot's Learn to Speak Spanish.

Learn to Speak Spanish from HyperGlot is more like a high school language class. You can record your voice for comparison, as you can in Berlitz Live! Spanish, but HyperGlot's presentation is a bit austere. The program divides its chapters, such as "At the Market" and "Making a Long Distance Phone Call," into vocabulary, drills, and exercises—each accented with snippets of live-action video featuring native Spanish speakers.

What Learn to Speak Spanish lacks in panache, it makes up for in depth. A 361-page text and workbook contain vocabulary lists, quizzes, and grammar tests (the Berlitz product has only a slim user's manual), so you study even when you're away from your computer. There's no dictionary, though, so finding just the right word or phrase to get your message across can be tricky. (HyperGlot; 800-726-5087; $179)

If you want to learn a few key phrases for your trip to Mexico, Berlitz Live! Spanish is your best bet (even the kids will enjoy it). For more serious study, choose Learn to Speak Spanish. *—Christopher Lindquist*

¿Háblas español? If you'd like to learn, then warm up your CD-ROM drive, because there are two new self-taught Spanish courses out there that will have you hitting the hot spots and ordering *arroz con pollo* (chicken and rice) like a native in no time.

Berlitz Live! Spanish
Platform: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ½

Learn to Speak Spanish
Platform: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★

Have Mouse, Will Travel

Remote control isn't just for TV anymore. The **Beam•r** is a cordless infrared trackball that gives you point-and-click control of your computer from across the room (up to 50 feet). Spin the ball to move the cursor, click and drag with the three "mouse" buttons, and program the five extra buttons to perform your favorite command sequences. The Beam•r's fine for most multimedia titles, but it's a bit sluggish for action games. And if you happen to be a southpaw, you'll just have to get used to a button layout designed with right-handers in mind. (Forte Communications; 408-733-5100; $249) *—Ann M. Marcus*

Platform: PC/Mac
Rating: ★ ★

Beam a little beam for me with Forte's infrared trackball.

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edutainment

BOOK-SMART

A Real Page-Turner

Reading comes to life—literally—in The Pagemaster.

In the world of Adventure, players meet up with Long John Silver.

Remember **The Pagemaster**? Last year's blockbuster animated movie starring Macaulay Culkin has come to the computer, courtesy of Turner's Home Entertainment division. The interactive version of the literary adventure is a rich mix of dazzling graphics and challenging play. The game also introduces kids to the exciting world of reading, reminding cynics that multimedia can mean more than just glitzy entertainment.

The Pagemaster game has the same premise as the movie—Richard Tyler (Culkin's character in the movie) must enter the fantastical realm of classic literature to rescue the Pagemaster—but new puzzles mean that fans of the movie, or *The Pagemaster* book, won't already know how to unravel the mystery. Also, while the game borrows some animation from the movie, most of the images were created specifically for the game.

As Richard, young players enter the genres of Adventure, Horror, and Fantasy, where they meet up with such famous literary characters as Long John Silver and Frankenstein. To progress along their journey, they must solve riddles and puzzles. These brain twisters aren't easy—the game will probably take kids 20 to 30 hours to complete—but consulting the game's many books and listening carefully for clues are the keys to success, especially since there's more than one way to solve each one. After they've completed the game, kids can replay the adventure for a high score by trying to add more items (each is worth points) to their inventory and making fewer mistakes.

The Pagemaster is recommended for ages 6 to 12, but it should appeal to kids of all ages—and their parents. Just make sure would-be Pagemasters are technologically equipped: A double-speed CD-ROM drive is needed to play this double-disc game. (Turner Home Entertainment; 404-827-2890; street price less than $50)—*Christine Grech*

Platform: Win CD/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

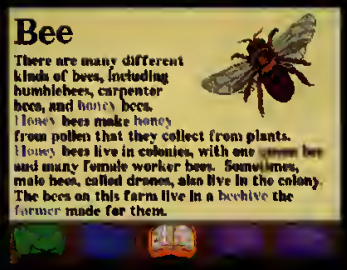
Interested explorers can click on the silo elevator to learn more about it.

Down on The Farm

Milk doesn't come ready-made in cartons, and carrots don't simply materialize on grocery stands. But these simple facts are not always obvious to kids. Humongous Entertainment's **Junior Encyclopedia: The Farm** may help you show them the real story.

The Encyclopedia lets kids explore farm life without leaving home. The program opens with an aerial view of the farm, from which players can zoom in on the area that they want to explore: the orchard, pond, vegetable garden, chicken coop, cellar, tool shed, loft, mill, and many more. Assisted by their ever-present guide, Buzzy the Knowledge Bug, kids can even delve into mini ecosystems such as a cluster of fungi under the bridge or the reed-filled marsh by the mill. They can also choose to navigate the program through the Information Pages, a glossary-cum-index that is hot-linked to various locations in the farm.

The Farm's animations are realistic in a cartoonish manner, and cover both the educational and the entertaining. A screen may illustrate both the mechanics of sheep shearing and a dancing apple pie, for example.



Clicking on pictures in the Information Pages takes kids to the corresponding farm scene.

Buzzy the Knowledge Bug shares all kinds of interesting farm facts with visitors.

Designed for ages 3 to 8, the disc packs plenty of entertainment for all ages. The only thing missing is the ripe smell of the barn. The second Junior Encyclopedia, The Airport, should be available by the time you read this. (Humongous Entertainment; 206-485-1212; $34.95) *—Joy J. Ma*

Platform: Win CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

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CLASSICS REVISTED

Peter and The Wolf

Chuck Jones supplies the animation, but the real star of Peter and The Wolf is the classic music.

This multimedia rendition of the classic musical tale, **Chuck Jones' Peter and The Wolf,** combines late composer Sergei Prokofiev's beautiful original score with exceptional comic-book style animation by Looney Toons animator Chuck Jones. The story is narrated by an all-star cast, including *Cheers*' Kirstie Alley and *Sleepless in Seattle*'s Ross Malinger. True to its musical roots, Peter and The Wolf includes an orchestra section that teaches aspiring musicians about various instruments. They can even rearrange the instruments to alter the score. A simple Frogger-style game rounds out the disc, and a bonus audio CD is also included. (Time Warner Interactive; 800-482-3766; $49.95) *—Joel Enos*

Platform: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Helen of Troy mistakes Morgan for Odysseus, but since she seems cool, he decides to help her out.

Recess In Greece

Ancient history has never been more fun. Morgan Interactive's **Recess in Greece** sends Morgan the chimp and his animal pals back to classical times in an excellent learning adventure for ages 7 to 12. Players must help Morgan return to the modern era by reenacting a wacky version of Homer's *The Iliad.* They'll learn about ancient Greek culture while exploring the historic sites and playing challenging games that advance their quest. The program's encyclopedia serves up the straight facts without all the fun, if they're curious. The trip to ancient Greece requires a double-speed CD-ROM drive. (Morgan Interactive; 415-693-9596; $29.95) *—Christine Grech*

Platform: Win CD/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Animal Safari

Music videos and short documentaries are all part of the learning fun in Animal Safari.

Professor Iris' Fun Field Trip: Animal Safari uses exotic wildlife to help kids from ages 4 to 8 develop a range of skills, including puzzle solving, painting, and vocabulary. The first in Discovery Multimedia's Ready, Set, Learn CD-ROM series, the disc takes kids on a learning safari where they can't help but have a good time, too. Kids will find plenty of animations to explore on each page, and they need only call on friends like Professor Iris for interesting facts and games, Ms. Principal for new words, Plant for coloring fun, and Piano to watch mini-documentaries and music videos. (Discovery Multimedia; 800-762-2189; $49.95) *—Joy J. Ma*

Platform: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ½

Kids learn about perspective by creating a 2-D picture and seeing it appear in 3-D.

Thinkin' Things Collection 2

Edmark's done it again: **Thinkin' Things Collection 2** is another outstanding children's product. Designed for older kids (ages 6-12) than its predecessor, Thinkin' Things Collection 1 (which aimed at ages 4 to 8), the new version uses a variety of fun but challenging activities to help kids become problem-solvers and thinkers. They can try 2-3D Blox and Snake Blox, creative activities that let kids create complex two- and three-dimensional compositions; Frippletration, a Concentration-like matching game; Oranga Banga's Band, where they learn and create rhythms; and Toony's Tunes, a music-creation game. (Edmark; 206-556-8484; street price $50) *—Christine Grech*

Platform: DOS/Windows, Mac
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

the Pagemaster™

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With The Pagemaster™ CD-ROM game, the adventure continues where the smash hit film leaves off! This dazzling, state-of-the-art game lets your kids use their imaginations to create a new, astounding, and totally awesome experience every time they play! The Pagemaster™ CD-ROM game– Continue the Adventure!

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Game On

Corey Sandler

Making Virtual Music

There's a new breed of truly visceral computer games that go far beyond tapping your keyboard to pilot a Boeing 747, wrestling with a joystick to shoot hoops with left fielder Michael Jordan, or clicking your mouse to build an entire downtown business district.

If you wanna be a rock 'n' roll star—and who doesn't?—Ahead's new Virtual Guitar lets you get down to business and hold a simulated instrument of destruction right in your hands.

Now shipping after more than a year of hype (see Sharp Edge, March 1994, page 11, and September 1994, page 9), Virtual Guitar is like Microsoft Flight Simulator delivered with a cockpit, NBA Jam complete with a hoop and a ball, or SimCity equipped with a hard hat and bulldozer.

It all starts with the hardware: The $100 Virtual Guitar is a game controller that looks and sort of feels like a real electric guitar. But think air guitar—this dream

Virtual Guitar looks and feels like a real guitar, but it doesn't care which simulated strings you strum.

maker has no frets to finger and it doesn't care which simulated strings you strum.

The product ships with a rather basic game called Welcome to West Feedback that introduces the concepts of the controller. But the first major add-on game is the impressive Quest for Fame: Featuring Aerosmith. Yes, that Aerosmith—the heavy-hype heavy-metal band that has launched a million amateur air guitar sessions.

The game begins in your bedroom, where you polish your jamming skills. Reality is submerged; the posters on the wall come to life and the television set in the room displays an Interactive Virtual Music Game Show. You move on to a gig with your buddies at handsome venues like The Roadkill Grille and the Barrelhouse. If you master your licks to their liking, you're invited to sit in on a jam with Aerosmith stars Brad Whitford and the leathery Steven Tyler. Get even hotter, and you'll eam a chance for a recording session to make a demo tape that mixes your virtual strumming with actual Aerosmith tracks.

Aerosmith's talent scouts want you to join the band.

The final reward is an appearance at the aptly named Humongodome with the full Aerosmith band. Foul up, and the bad boys from Boston will flash you dirty looks and summon a roadie to yank you off the stage. But if you're cooking, you're one of the boys. The game actually has dozens of possible outcomes, and not all of them qualify as the Great American Rock 'n' Roll Dream.

Granted, Virtual Guitar is still rather primitive. You can't actually learn to play guitar, for example: This is air guitar made flesh, not Mrs. Schwartz's music class. And that's fine with me. I enjoy Flight Simulator and NBA Jam, but I know they won't make me a real pilot or a hardcourt hero. Like other simulators, Virtual Guitar simply lets you try out some dreams.

But there's more on the drawing board. Alex Donnini, president of Ahead, hopes to put Virtual Music data on commercial audio CDs; for example, you could buy the latest Eric Clapton album and play rhythm along with Slowhand. And there's no reason to limit the concept to a guitar. Next up could be virtual drums or virtual piano, or perhaps even a sound-smoothing tone-adjusting virtual singing accessory.

Ahead is also looking to develop a pro version that will take the "air" out of the guitar and actually recognize finger positions; this could lead to a line of real music-education products and super-realistic games. At some point, the Virtual Guitar as specialized joystick may merge with Virtual Guitar as computerized real guitar, complete with a sophisticated MIDI pickup.

And just think about extending the concept to virtual reality entertainment at the computer-driven theme park of the future. Put on the goggles, strap on the axe, and step up to the mike to jam with the Rolling Stones. It's already in the works: The Virtual Guitar has been one of the biggest stars at Walt Disney World's Innoventions display in Florida for the past few months.

Games are the ways in which we try on our dreams and experiment with new persona. My mind races with the possibilities we're glimpsing here: an error-correcting drum kit, an automatic musical composition program to match my words, and a self-configuring game program to fulfill any dream. Meanwhile, you'll have to excuse me; I've got a gig. (Ahead; 617-271-0900; Win CD, $99.95, including Welcome to West Feedback; other CD-ROM games priced from $24.95 to $79.95)

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Tube Man

Keith Ferrell

Time Flies

There is an Achilles Heel at the heart of interactive television, if I may scramble an anatomical metaphor. It's the same vulnerability that wounds us all daily.

It's the question of time. There's not enough of it now, and there's going to be a lot less.

When are we going to take advantage of all the marvels and wonders of interactive television? There's no time to watch everything we want to watch now, and interactive TV will only make it worse.

ILLUSTRATION BY ROB BARBER

Movies-on-demand systems were designed to solve the "60 million channels and nothing on" dilemma. Watch what you want, when you want, and pay as you go—thousands of movies, tens of thousands of TV shows. Sounds great, and probably is. The other night, late, I'd have given anything to see George Stevens' *Giant*. I was ready for Rock, Liz, Jimmy, and the Texas oil fields, but I don't have a copy of the videocassette. It would've been well worth a couple of bucks to have the setup that would have delivered it to my set right then.

But if you've got 5,000 movies to choose from, a few dozen titles are likely to trigger your I-want-to-see-that-now impulse every time you look for the one you initially wanted to see. When are you going to watch them all?

Then there's the Tell-Me-More Button. This is my favorite. You're watching the news, say, and you want to know more about Bosnia, or structured health care, or the philosophy of Lance Ito. Click a button on the screen and either a) the program freezes while the additional information is delivered or b) the information is downloaded to your TV—or the computer attached to it—to view later. Either way, something gets deferred, whether it's the balance of the broadcast you were watching in the first place, or what you're downloading to watch later—not to mention any aspect of your life not related to looking at the TV.

There's no time to watch everything we want to watch, and interactive TV is about to make it worse.

With cable and the VCR, there's already too much video material in our homes. We've become acquisitive of television. We collect programs; we tape shows, movies, images. To what end? The tapes stack up and collect dust. How many tapes do you have in your house? How many do you watch even once a year? How many are accurately labeled? (At least interactive TV will properly label and file the stuff. You may never get around to watching it, but by God, you'll know what's what and where it is.)

Ultimately, though, it may not matter that we don't watch the video we collect. It may be the act of collecting that satisfies us, that chains us ever more firmly to our couches and screens. It used to be books: Jack London had tens of thousands of volumes in his personal library, far more than anyone could ever hope to read. That didn't matter, London said. He might not ever sail in every boat, but he was ready to voyage anywhere, whenever he wanted to go.

The difference is that with books—or stamps, or minerals, or toy soldiers—the collection is at least in some ways tactile, connected to the real world, to life. Collecting TV, even great movies like *Giant*, continues and extends the great divorce from the outer world that the tube inaugurated half a century ago. We've already had 50 years of TV, and to those of us who've been around most of those years, all we can say, simply and sadly, is "Where does the time go?"

Keith Ferrell is the vice president of OMNI, *science and technology editor for* Penthouse, *and editorial director for General Media Online Services, each of which covers the interactive revolution in its own way.*

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MTV MUSIC TELEVISION

CLUB DEAD

WELCOME TO MTV'S 1ST CEREBRAL, CINEMATIC, ADVENTURE CD-ROM

Lane Powers-vixen with a third eye.

Lewis Scudder-Head of Security at the Alexandria-playing with his gun "sparky"

Richie 7-renowned sonic artist- smugly basking in his "Richie 7 Paradox Pod".

In the future, the posh jet set, hell-bent on synthetic experience go to club Alexandria to get their fix of "V" (virtual reality)... Trouble is people are going belly-up like flies.

Now you-Sam Frost (cyberplumber)-have 4 days, your logic, instinct and the things you tap over (in 40 different locations across 17 floors in the Alexandria) to figure it out... and stay alive.

- 90 minutes of video with over 40 actors—directed, produced and edited by MTV
- Original MTV soundtrack

MATURE
M
AGES 17+

MATURE
REALISTIC VIOLENCE

VIACOM NEWMEDIA

For more information on Club Dead call (800) 469-2539

Multimaniac

Paul Bonner

Shop 'Til You Drop

This is such a wonderful time of year. My New Year's hangover has finally begun to fade, spring is just around the corner, and I've actually begun to make some progress against the credit-card balances that I piled up during the holidays.

To a loyal American, a below-the-max credit-line balance can mean only one thing: It's time to go shopping again.

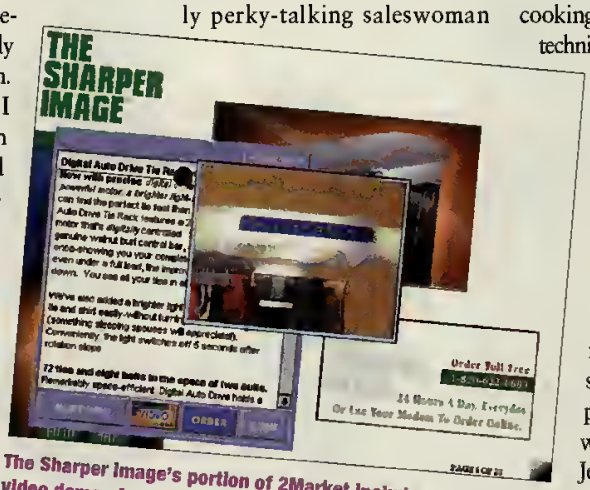
Of course, being the Multimaniac, I didn't actually go anywhere—much less to the local mall. Rather, I headed for cyberspace. Loyalty to our democratic ideals is one thing, but mingling with the unwashed masses as they paw the sale racks is quite another. Instead, I turned to 2Market, a CD-ROM-based collection of catalogs from the company of the same name, which was formed by America Online, Apple, and Medior. (2Market, 800-622-6600; Win CD/Mac CD, $19.95 for four-issue subscription)

Within a few minutes, I began to wonder if letting my mouse do the walking was such a great idea.

2Market on CD (and the associated service on AOL) offers goodies by such mainstream merchants as Lands' End, The Sharper Image, Hammacher Schlemmer, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Sony Music. Not only would I not have to share air with my neighbors, but 2Market's online component meant I wouldn't even have to talk to a stranger on the phone to order.

Within only a few minutes of installing the Windows version of the program, however, I began to wonder if letting my mouse do the walking was such a great idea. Frankly, I found my admiration for printed catalogs growing with every moment I spent flipping the pages of 2Market's electronic ones.

Not that 2Market isn't a slick production. It is, and I can even forgive the painfully perky-talking saleswoman who welcomes you to the electronic mall. After all, it's your own fault if you're foolish enough to click the Play Intro button.



The Sharper Image's portion of 2Market includes a digitized-video demo of a nifty digital tie rack.

Plus, there are some cool ideas here. Sony Music, for instance, presents 10-to-15-second audio clips for most of the CDs that it offers, and even some brief clips from single-song videos. Oddly, however, neither audio nor video samplers are available for the full-length videos sold through 2Market.

The Sharper Image also makes great use of 2Market's multimedia capabilities by presenting an absolutely scintillating video commercial for the world's first fully digital tie rack (DTR). Of course, to paraphrase Robin Williams talking about cocaine, digital tie racks might well be God's way of telling you that you make too much money. But that's immaterial: What counts here is that by including a sales presentation for the DTR, The Sharper Image presents all the evidence that any 2Market user needs to decide whether he, or she, is truly DTR material.

Another catalog publisher that makes good use of the electronic format is the Chef's Catalog, which includes demonstrations of cooking equipment, recipes, and cooking-technique hints in its section of 2Market.

Some of the other stuff on the disc, unfortunately, is less impressive—for instance, the Find facility, which supposedly locates the exact item you want from any of the catalogs on the disc. That sounded cool; I fancied typing in "cashmere-lined fishing boots" and getting a list of a dozen sources for the same. Instead, I had to select my search target from a completely useless list of choices filled with terms like "men's apparel." Jeez, I'll bet it took them a good five minutes to create that index.

Still, 2Market's real problem is that CD-ROM is the wrong technology for catalog shopping. It's too expensive, and it's too limited.

Instead of a single, comprehensive CD-ROM catalog, we get compilations like 2Market, which present a few pages each from a dozen or more catalogs. That's not enough variety for the Multimaniac—I want to shop in the world of Encyclopaedia Brittanica, not in *Reader's Digest* land. I want to see every gadget that The Sharper Image carries, not just a few that they can't figure out how to unload any other way. And I certainly don't want to pay $19.95 for a year's subscription to 2Market—even the Multimaniac isn't crazy enough to pay for junk mail.

So for now, I think I'll stick to paper catalogs and the Home Shopping Network.

NOTHING, NOTHING CAN PREPARE YOUR PC AND 32X.

FINISH HIM!

SMOKE AWAITS

FRIENDSHIP?

ALL 12 KOMBAT WARRIORS?

MORTAL KOMBAT II®

NOTHING, NOTHING CAN PREPARE YOU... for the *real* arcade action of Mortal Kombat® II. Trade up to faster game play, realistic character animation, bone-crunching music and sound f/x of the arcade smash! Brutal special moves, Friendships, Babalities, hidden surprises, crushing combos and outrageous finishing moves are yours to kommand. Let the Kombat Kontinue!!!

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MIDWAY

GENESIS 32X™

PC CD-ROM

3.5" DISK

Acclaim® entertainment inc.

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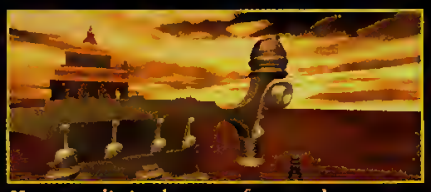
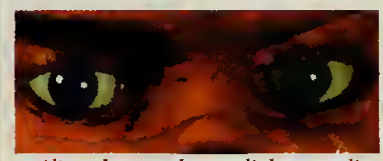
Otherworldly 256 color 3-D graphics



Hyper-realistic planet surfaces and structures

DEAD ALIENS TELL NO TALES

You've just dropped through 1000 miles of gaseous nitro in your exo-rover, in search of a big ugly alien with information to peddle. Unfortunately, you're a little too late...your alien buddy apparently got blasted by someone else!



Aliens that are almost a little too real!

You are Commander Blood, part human, part robot. Your mission: Cruise the universe, withstand really bad alien comedy and discover the meaning of life. Use your extraterrestrial puzzle-solving ability to navigate through this bizarre space oddity.

With one of the coolest interfaces in the galaxy, Commander Blood is a visual feast with realistic planet surfaces, arcade-like action sequences and aliens so life-like, you'll almost smell them!

Commander Blood is a space adventure with a major attitude. Look for it at terran stores now or call 1-800-778-2299 to order your copy.

For IBM® CD-ROM. Supports most sound cards

MINDSCAPE®

From the creators of Dragon Lore™ & MegaRace™

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The Second Annual Electronic Entertainment

Editors' Choice Awards

E salutes 1994's best. These 25 games, multimedia titles, hardware products, and technology breakthroughs set the standard for excellence today—and pave the way for even greater things tomorrow.

You already know how hard it is to sort through today's deluge of interactive entertainment products. With literally thousands of them hitting the market last year, it's a full-time job to separate the so-so from the spectacular and the disappointing from the distinguished.

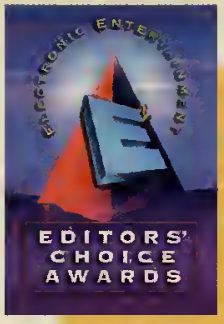
In fact, it's our full-time job. The editors at E^2 play just about every new game, multimedia title, and edutainment program on the market. Plus, we do hands-on tests of the top multimedia computers, game machines, peripherals, and system upgrades. The end result of our relentless pursuit of a good time? The Second Annual E^2 Editors' Choice Awards.

Our Awards honor the best electronic entertainment products of 1994; like the Oscars, we wait until spring to announce the winners so that we can include each year's last-minute arrivals. We've singled out the best in 16 categories, including games, multimedia, and hardware.

While our winners represent today's finest, we're focused on tomorrow, too. That's where our three Breakthrough awards come in. Our Breakthrough winners are visionary, ground-breaking products that demonstrate the most exciting new ideas and technologies.

These 25 distinguished products—including eight runners-up that we just couldn't ignore—are the best of the best. Each one has something unique to offer you for your entertainment dollar, and we're thrilled to give them our stamp of approval.

Edited by Christine Grech



Best Game

Doom II: Hell on Earth

The original Doom created a gaming sensation with its smooth-scrolling first-person perspective; consistent, exciting game play; and realistic sound effects.

Plenty of game companies tried to cash in with new Doom clones, but why settle for an impostor when you can have the original—only better? Doom II: Hell on Earth is precisely that. The sequel delivers more of everything: more levels, more monsters, more weapons, more blood, more fun, and—if you're not careful—a more serious case of DIMS (Doom-induced motion sickness).

Best Game: Doom II

Doom II maintains all of the elements that made Doom great, but boosts the intensity level to 11. Still easy to play, it's harder than ever to master. New puzzle elements and increased enemy intelligence add a bit of strategy to the shoot-and-scoot game play, creating a complete gaming experience. The game has caught some flak for being overly violent, but the gore is mostly of the low-resolution, non-human, cartoon variety.

We generally don't love sequels, and we miss the shareware version, but that's about all you can quibble with here. Our advice is to cock your double-barreled shotgun and watch out for the baby spider monsters. And if you need a little extra help, look for some tips in our Strategy Guide on page 53. (GT Interactive; 800-332-4300; DOS/DOS CD, street price $40-$50)

Best Game Runner-Up

FIFA International Soccer for 3DO

Even if you're not a soccer fan, you'll be dazzled by FIFA International Soccer for 3DO from Electronic Arts. FIFA's spectacular graphics, excellent game play, and the ability to let as many as six players compete at once bring the World Cup into your living room. Multiple camera angles give you a new perspective on the action. It's easiest to play while in Telly view, but be sure to use the other four cameras to relive instant replays of your best plays.

Don't have a 3DO player? Electronic Arts also sells DOS versions of FIFA, but they don't measure up to the 3DO in terms of graphics, game control, and camera angles. PC owners who don't want to miss out on the fun may want to consider Creative Labs' new 3DO Blaster (see the Breakthrough Hardware award). (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; 3DO, $59.95)

Breakthrough Game

Magic Carpet

No sequel or clone will cut it when it comes to our Breakthrough Game category, and Magic Carpet is a true original. In this mix of free-scrolling flying action and adventure game, you're a novice wizard battling your adversaries from atop a flying carpet.

You attack enemies, build castles, and cause earthquakes, volcanoes, and other unnatural disturbances as you zoom over a gorgeous landscape of ocean and islands, all generated on the fly. Real-time graphics creation means Magic Carpet's world goes on forever, never quite repeating itself. How's that for replayability?

Breakthrough Game: Magic Carpet

Of course, to fully experience Magic Carpet's breathtaking 'scapes, you'll need a Pentium-powered PC. The game will run on a 486, but it's just not the same. For tips on navigating Magic Carpet's never-ending world, take our exclusive Guided Tour on page 57. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; DOS CD, $59.95)

Breakthrough Game Runner-Up

Creature Shock

Creature Shock is one of the first games to seamlessly pair splashy cinematics with equally gorgeous game play. Unlike most games, you can't always tell where the intro sequence or cut-scene ends and the game play begins. And Creature Shock is no shallow looker: It delivers top-notch action as you battle monsters who are intent on destroying Earth. Beautiful maze-crawling sections are interspersed with a good mix of shoot-it-before-it-gets-you action. Plus, the enemy critters are the biggest and ugliest around. (Virgin Interactive Entertainment; 800-874-4607; DOS CD/3DO, street price $59.95-$69.95)

Breakthrough Multimedia Title

Star Trek: The Next Generation Interactive Technical Manual

The first commercial product to use Apple's QuickTime VR technology, Star Trek: The Next Generation Interactive Technical Manual gives Trekkies the chance of a lifetime to explore the U.S.S. *Enterprise*. Simon & Schuster Interactive employs QuickTime VR to combine more than 15,000 still photographs of the starship into 86 complete 360-degree images. The end result is an amazing multimedia tour de force that lets you zoom in for a closer look at whatever captures your fantasy. Eventually, QuickTime VR will enable virtual visits to all kinds of locations, real and imagined. (Simon & Schuster Interactive; 800-983-5333; Win CD/Mac CD, $69.95)

Niche Warriors

Best Role-Playing Game

Alien Logic

This game adds a breath of ftesh air to the sometimes predictable world of role-playing games. No elves, orcs, and spells here: Alien Logic plays out in a beautiful outer-space world. The game shines with slick Super VGA graphics and an easy-to-use point-and-click interface. (Strategic Simulations; 800-601-7529; DOS CD, $59.95)

Best Strategy Game

Dominus

Our top sttategy game is certainly that, but Dominus also offers players a lot more. Along with setting strategy and battling to protect your kingdom from attack by rival clans, you get a healthy dose of role-playing, resource allocation, and arcade action. And Dominus delivers great game play, no matter which way you choose to play. (U.S. Gold; 415-693-0297; DOS, $49.95; DOS CD, $54.95)

Best Simulation Game

Wolf

Built the city, bought the farm, and watched the ants? Try life as a Wolf. This unique simulator lets you give survival a spin, equipped with little more than four paws, a keen nose, and a terrific fur coat. It sounds simple, but even Jack Nicholson would find it challenging. Wolf is great fun to play, and you also can't help but learn about these intriguing creatures as you step into their skin. (Sanctuary Woods; 415-286-6110; DOS/DOS CD, $49.95)

Best Adventure Game

The Legend of Kyrandia Book Three: Malcolm's Revenge

Our Adventure Game selection is another sequel that offers more of the same, and then some. The latest installment of the Legend of Kyrandia series adds stunning 3-D cinematics, CD-quality music, and excellent sound effects to the proven storyline, easy-to-use interface, and challenging puzzles that made its predecessors such big hits. (Virgin Interactive Entertainment; 800-874-4607; DOS CD, street price $49.95-$54.95)

Best Brain-Drain Game

Troubled Souls

The Mac is the big winner when it comes to puzzle games with Troubled Souls, a macabre challenge not yet available for the PC. In this simple but utterly addictive game, you attempt to clear the playing field by forming rings out of various pieces of hardware and body parts. Troubled Souls' game play is compelling, and its haunting music and dark graphics add to the atmospheric fun. (MacSoft; 800-229-2714; Mac, $49.99)

Best Action Game

Doom II: Hell on Earth

Doom II, undeniably the most anticipated game of the year and *E*^{2}'s Best Game, wouldn't be either if it weren't also a top-notch action game. Challenging play, fast-moving graphics, and great sound effects make this the top shooter, period. (GT Interactive; 800-332-4300; DOS/DOS CD, street price $40-$50)

Best Sports Game

FIFA International Soccer for 3DO

The runner-up for Best Game overall, FIFA for 3DO is certainly the top sports game, too. Knockout graphics, multiple views, exciting game play, and multiplayer options are a compelling reason to get your hands on a 3DO player. Too bad the PC version is a bit of a letdown. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; 3DO, $59.95)

Best Wings & Wheels Game

TIE Fighter

Last year, the *Star Wars* flight simulator X-Wing won the distinction of Best Game. This year, TIE Fighter snags the Wings & Wheels category. With all the tricks LucasArts perfected in X-Wing plus the chance to switch sides and fly for Darth Vader, TIE Fighter has every advantage. When you add improved graphics and more mission options, you've created an irresistible challenge. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; DOS, $54.95)

Breakthrough Multimedia: Star Trek Interactive

Breakthrough Multimedia Title Runner-Up

BAR-MIN-SKI: Consumer Product

BAR-MIN-SKI is a cultural breakthrough, bringing an adventurous, artistic sensibility to the corporate world of multimedia. Busting categories, this disc features a multimedia portfolio of artist Bill Barminski as well as a biography, music, and even a game. (Consumer Productions; 310-391-5897; Win CD/Mac CD, $49.95)

Best Edutainment Title

Freddi Fish and the Case of the Missing Kelp Seeds

What's refreshing about Freddi Fish and the Case of the Missing Kelp Seeds is that it's pure entertainment. Unlike the majority of kids' programs—and there are stacks of them—Freddi doesn't paint a thin coat of fun over a solid core of schoolwork. Instead, this disc's a delightful romp through a breathtaking underwater world. Freddi Fish features wonderful original characters, a strong storyline, appropriately challenging puzzles, and beautiful animation. Created by Humongous Entertainment, the company who brought us Putt-Putt and Fatty Bear, this junior adventure series product lives up to the high standards set by its popular predecessors. (Humongous Entertainment; 206-485-1212; Win CD, $49.95)

Best Edutainment: Freddi Fish

Best Edutainment Title Runner-Up

Recess in Greece

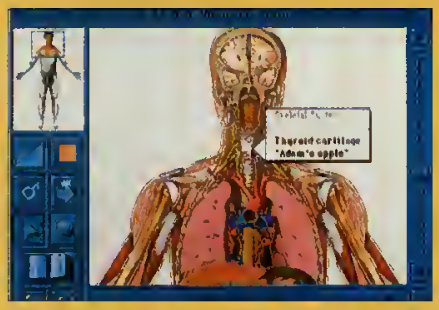
Recess in Greece provides a compelling adventure for older kids. There is some educational content, but it's presented in a nonintrusive way that makes learning ancient history all part of the fun. Recess also has excellent characters, great graphics, and fun games. (Morgan Interactive; 415-693-9596; Win CD/Mac CD, $29.95)

continued on page 48

Best Multimedia Title

A.D.A.M. The Inside Story

Choosing a single product from the diverse field of multimedia titles is a tough proposition. But A.D.A.M. The Inside Story demonstrates all the right qualities: compelling use of multimedia, a wealth of information, and an innovative approach. On all counts, A.D.A.M. delivers in its comprehensive look at how our bodies work. A.D.A.M. uses humor to draw you in and make a complex topic downright fascinating. The program has hundreds of animations that show how it all works—and even lets you peel away body layers to see what's underneath. (A.D.A.M. Software; 800-408-2326; Win CD/Mac CD, $79.95)



Best Multimedia Title: A.D.A.M.

Best Multimedia Title Runner-Up

This Is Spinal Tap

The runner-up for Best Multimedia title will appeal to a relatively narrow—but incredibly dedicated—audience. This Is Spinal Tap uses interactive multimedia to bring new fun to the cult classic movie. The disc includes the entire Rob Reiner satire of rock 'n' roll documentaries, in full-screen glory. More important, it lets you look at the rockumentary in new ways: You can watch it with the original audio, with commentary from the actors, or with Reiner and other producers explaining what went on behind the scenes. Coolest of all, the search program doesn't just find text, but also looks up songs, spoken words, and objects that appear in the film. The two-disc package also includes an hour of hilarious outtakes. This Is Spinal Tap is also available in a native Power PC version. (Voyager; 800-446-2001; Win/Mac CD, $34.95)

Best Online Entertainment

The Internet

The Internet is hard to quantify, but even harder to ignore. Vast, anarchic, and unruly, the Internet has something for everyone—if you know how to find it. For many people, just cruising its vast resources is the best entertainment, while other folks will spend their time chatting with newfound friends, joining entertainment newsgroups, downloading music and video files, surfing the World Wide Web in pursuit of all kinds of cool stuff, and even playing games. Getting full access can be a headache, but the rewards are practically limitless.

Best Online Entertainment: The Internet

Best Game Machine

Panasonic FZ-1 REAL 3DO Interactive Multiplayer System

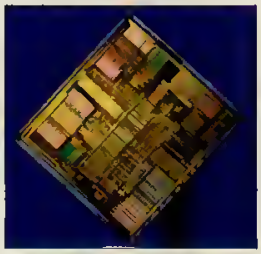
3DO is the best game machine you can buy right now. The second generation of 3DO games, including such standouts as Road Rash, FIFA International Soccer, and Samurai Shodown, demonstrate the system's potential to bring arcade-quality games to home TV sets. The Panasonic machine has recently been joined in the marketplace by a 3DO unit from GoldStar and a PC-based player from Creative Labs, but it's still top dog. (For more on Creative Labs' 3DO Blaster, see the Breakthrough Hardware award.) Later this year, however, the 3DO system will face stiff competition from new next-generation game machines from Sony, Nintendo, and Sega. (Panasonic; 800-336-3506; $399.95)

Best Game Machine: 3DO

Best Game Computer

Intel Pentium 90

The PC is the best computer for playing games, thanks largely to the sheer number and variety of titles available for it. You have almost as many choices when it comes to buying a PC, too. Regardless of the brand name that it carries, though, the best gaming PC to buy is one powered by an Intel Pentium 90. The chip's widely publicized problems shouldn't affect gamers, and the Pentium 90 harnesses the necessary horsepower for advanced games such as Magic Carpet.



Best Computer: Pentium

Best Hardware Upgrade

SoundWorks Speakers

High-quality speakers are the easiest way to give games and multimedia titles a big boost without spending a fortune. Cambridge SoundWorks' eponymous SoundWorks self-powered audio system uses a three-piece design to deliver high-quality (read: expensive-sounding) audio. The subwoofer puts out plenty of tight, controlled bass, while the small satellite speakers are shielded for use with your computer. Eliminating the middleman helps keep the price below $200. If it had a volume control, it'd be perfect. (Cambridge SoundWorks; 800-367-4434; PC/Mac, $199)

Best Upgrade: SoundWorks

Best Hardware Upgrade Runner-Up

Plextor PX-45CH and PX-43CH Quad-Speed CD-RDM Drives

Adding a quad-speed CD-ROM drive to your system puts you ahead of the technology curve. Plextor's PX-45CH (the external model) and PX-43CH (the internal model) deliver data at a superfast 600Kbps, resulting in bigger video windows and smoother playback. Of course, you won't see these improvements unless your games are written to take advantage of a quad-speed drive. Today, only a handful of game and multimedia titles support quad-speed drives, but that should change soon. (Plextor; 800-475-3986; PC/Mac; internal, $459-$499; external, $549-$599)

Breakthrough Hardware

Creative Labs 3DO Blaster

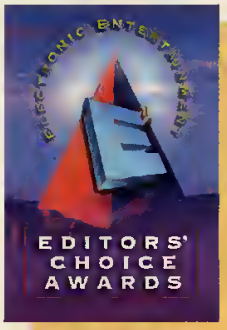
If the 3DO is the best game machine and the PC is the best game computer, the 3DO Blaster gives you the best of both worlds. This add-in board for your PC lets you play 3DO games in your regular CD-ROM drive. Sure, it costs as much as a standalone 3DO system, but if the PC is your main machine—and you still want to play those cool 3DO games—it's the only way to go. (Creative Labs; 800-998-1000; PC, $399)

Breakthrough Hardware: 3DO Blaster

Breakthrough Hardware Runner-Up

Cable modems

Cable modems now being tested by technology heavyweights such as Intel and Hewlett-Packard will make today's online services seem like quaint relics. Forget 14.4 kilobits per second: These babies will use coaxial cables to pour up to 500 *megabits* per second onto your screen. That's plenty fast enough for no-wait graphics and even full-motion video.



Most Entertaining Computer

Macintosh Performa 638CD

The PC may have the edge in game software, but when it comes to a pure entertainment machine, the Mac Performa 638CD can't be topped. The Performa 638CD is built for multimedia from the drawing board, with a double-speed CD-ROM drive, built-in TV tuner, remote control, speakers in the monitor, and front-panel volume controls. Also, Apple upgrade boards let you install a 486 chip to run PC games or a PowerPC processor for the fastest Mac performance possible. (Apple Computer; 800-767-2275; $2,299-$2,399)

Most Entertaining Computer: Mac Performa 638CD

Most Entertaining Computer Runner-Up

Packard Bell Multimedia Series 486DX2/66

Die-hard PC fans would never consider a Macintosh. Luckily, they can get everything they need with Packard Bell's Multimedia Series PCs. The 66DX2TV450, for example, is a well-rounded, easy-to-use 486 that also has a double-speed CD-ROM drive and built-in TV tuner. Its color-coded cables and Navigator software make for a painless setup. (Packard Bell; 800-733-5858; $1,799-$1,999)

There's the Oscars for movie actors, the Emmys for TV stars, and the Tonys for stage players. Now E^2 gives the rising stars of interactive multimedia their due.

The Murphys

Four years ago, Chris Jones pulled on a sloppy raincoat, shoved a rumpled fedora onto his head, and slipped into the role of Tex Murphy, hard-boiled detective and star of the new live-action game Martian Memorandum. Jones' watershed transformation from a mild-mannered executive at game developer Access Software to a tough-yet-tender gumshoe patrolling the PC screen marked the first time that a live actor fancied up the plot of a computer game. Nobody has looked back since.

These days, everyone from Mark Hamill to Margot Kidder is starring in an interactive CD-ROM. And it's only just begun: In the next few months we'll see a slew of new CD-ROM games peopled with live actors, including The Daedalus Encounter (starring Tia Carrere), Johnny Mnemonic, The 11th Hour, and Phantasmagoria.

So, to honor this new artistic palette, E^2 is inaugurating a series of annual awards to those who have created the most outstanding live-action performances and cinematic deliveries on the small screen. We call them The Murphys, in honor of the now-legendary character that Jones first brought to life.

We promise we won't bore you with a vapid awards show. We'll skip the dreary task of renting out a glitzy ballroom, bypass the star-packed limos, and cut short the droning acceptance speeches. Let's get right to the meat of the matter—handing out the iron. **By James Daly**

Best Actor

Jimmie F. Skaggs

(Blown Away; IVI Publishing; 800-432-1332; Win CD, $59.95)

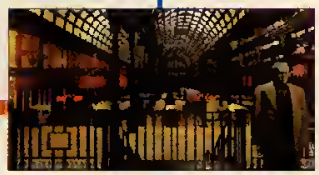
Veteran character actor Skaggs plays Justus, a stringy-haired mad bomber who has kidnapped your loved ones and is threatening to blow them into atoms. Skaggs' portrayal is right on the mark, a caustic blend of wit and over-the-edge dementia that turns Blown Away into something far more punchy than a simple puzzle game.

Best Actress

Paige Witte

(The Vortex: Quantum Gate II; HyperBole Studios; 800-989-3787; Win CD, $50)

It's not easy to act convincingly when you have to work with several possible storylines—not to mention two characters. But Witte accomplishes the task with aplomb, showing a wide range of emotions without the tiresome overplaying that many interactive titles seem to consider so amusing. Her characters—both the Aylinde woman Illyra and Jenny, the former girlfriend of protagonist Drew Griffin—are complete and compelling, something that can't be said for most of the one-dimensional performances so common in interactive entertainment.



Best Art

Gadget

(Synergy; 800-734-9466; Win CD/Mac CD, $79.99)

One of the most inventive computer-generated landscapes you've ever seen. There's a game element to this Japanese import, but the real thrill is Gadget's wild ride through a gorgeously rendered but unremittingly bleak urban landscape peopled with creepy, hollow-eyed residents and futuristic technology.

Best Use of Live-Action Footage

Road Rash

(Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; 3DO/Sega CD, $89.95)

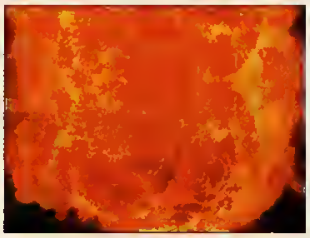
It's essentially a standard arcade motorcycle race, but developer Electronic Arts gave the 3DO version a special twist. The designers turned real video footage of the streets of San Francisco and the surrounding landscape into the realistic rendered background of this crazed internal combustion scoot-fest. Then there's the inclusion of music videos and tunes from bands like Soundgarden, Paw, and Monster Magnet. If that's not enough, the frenetic live-action cut scenes boost the adrenaline level even more. Just hold tight to the handlebars.

Best Music

MTV's Club Dead

(Viacom New Media; 212-258-6000; 3DO CD/Mac CD, $59.95)

Good music and MTV don't always go hand in hand, but Club Dead clicks with a funky groove created by Martin Atkins—producer, writer, and performer for such bands as Public Image Ltd., Ministry, and Killing Joke. It's the clever mix of industrial, techno-pop, rap, and R&B that makes Club Dead a game you can dance to.



Best Nerve-Rattling Explosion

Blown Away

(Blown Away; IVI Publishing; 800-432-1332; Win CD, $59.95)

Some of these blasts will have you wondering if your eyebrows are still in place. It's no wonder: The game borrows footage from last summer's Jeff Bridges/Tommy Lee Jones movie, which blew out windows all over Boston. Such boomers can come only from an industry that never shrinks from testing the limits of gunpowder.

Best Wacko

Vincent Schiavelli

(Corpse Killer; Digital Pictures; 800-262-5020; Mac CD/Sega CD, $59.95)

You're stranded on a steamy tropical island, your guts are being chewed apart by voodoo poison, and rotting zombies are trying to eat you for lunch. Yet it's all a tad snoozy—except for Schiavelli, who creates his own spotlight as Dr. Hellman, the crazed cult leader of the living dead.

The Gilbert Gottfried Award for Most Irritating Inhabitant of a CD-ROM

Lisa Turner

(Anyone for Cards?; Capstone; 800-468-7226; Win CD, $39.95)

Comic Gilbert Gottfried set the standard for unbearable digital performances in Midnight Movie Madness and Sports Freakz. That's why we've dedicated this award to Mr. G. The first recipient is Lisa Turner from Anyone For Cards?, who serves as the screechy narrator Viola. Turner's fingers-on-a-blackboard voice gives creaky old ladies everywhere a bad name. We'll never play Hearts again.

Best Story

Midnight Stranger

(Gazelle Technologies; 800-237-6675; Win CD/Mac CD, $59.95)

An early example of the way multimedia games can bust out of their niche as glorified cartoons. Midnight Stranger is a walk on the wild side of a nocturnal urban environment filled with flaky artists, self-effacing comedians, angry ex-cons, and other shrink bait. Then there's the bizarre plot that involves murder, aliens, and smuggled artifacts. And the disc never plays the same twice.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Chris Jones

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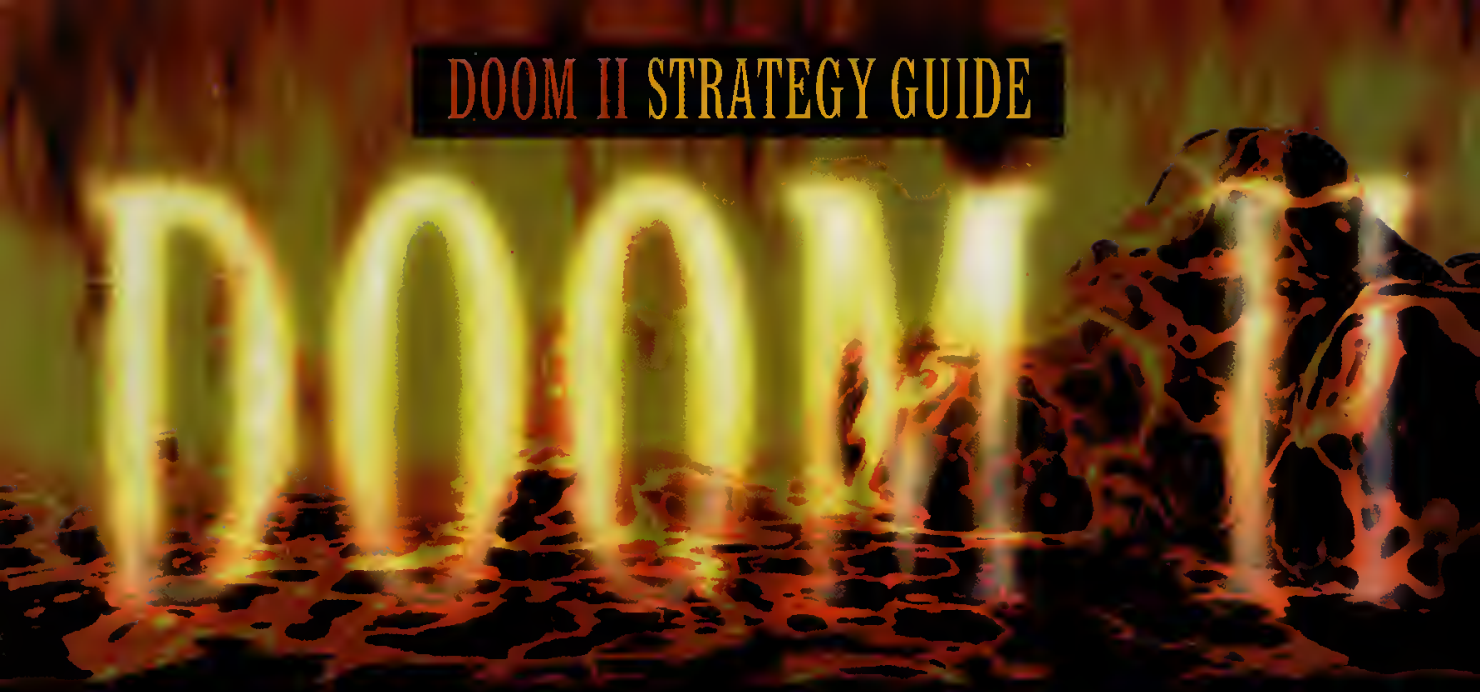
DOOM II STRATEGY GUIDE



Hell on Earth introduces seven new monsters. Here's how to handle 'em.

By Bill Meyer

Doom II: Hell on Earth is a lot like Doom, but it's populated with seven diabolical new creatures, each one able to give even veteran players a Hell of a time. If you expect to get far enough into the game to meet them, you'll need to master a few basic techniques. For hints on what works where, try our list of tactics for the encounters on levels 7, 11, 16, 21, 23, and 28.

No matter which level you are on, you have to use the Shift key for extra speed. This is especially crucial when running across long stretches of toxic waste and lava, leaping high gaps, or outrunning ugly hordes. Careful, though: It is easy to miss life-saving doors and objects when running too fast.

The other essential Doom skill is strafing—sidestepping back and forth while firing. To accomplish this, hold down the Alt key with your left hand's middle finger. At the same time, press the right and left cursor keys for direction with your opposite hand. Then press the Ctrl key with your left little finger to fire. If you master this, you can dodge close-up blasts from Imps, Hell Knights, Barons of Hell, and even Cyberdemons. If you don't, you won't get far.

Finally—although it is fun to Rambo through all the levels—a little strategy and patience go a long way. Open doors and duck in and out of rooms to lure out the inhabitants. Sidestep out from behind walls and take potshots at creatures. And learn what weapons are best for each bad boy in different situations.

The Arch-Vile can damage with the power of a BFG 9000.

1 Arachnotrons are the menacing offspring of the Spider Mastermind. The baby spider demons go down easier than their Pa—just three shotgun blasts—but they're also quicker and more mobile. In Mission 7 (Dead Simple), you face as many as a dozen of them. After you kill four Mancubuses in a large square field—which is a story all its own—the surrounding walls lower. Speed and invisibility are the name of the game at this juncture. Wait a moment until you see three of the twelve emerge from one side of the square complex. Choose an opening, grab a Blur Artifact, hit Shift and blast right by them. Outside, use the corners of the square area to shoot the spiders as they appear. But don't linger in one spot: Move, move, move, or you'll die, die, die.

Don't stand in one place when battling an Arachnotron.

2 The lanky, fiery **Arch-Vile** is the most dangerous and frightening addition to Doom II—he can even take you out while you're in God mode. This critter poses a real problem in Mission 11 ('O' of Destruction). The

Arch-Vile's weapon, a demonic interpretation of prayer, summons up the fiery jaws of Hell around you and devastates like a BFG 9000. The bad guy appears in the east quadrant of Level 11, in a room up some stairs patrolled by a pair of Imps. He emerges as soon as you enter, so step in and quickly retreat back to the stairs around the corner. Then sidestep up and fire your BFG. One good shot will do it.

3 One of the most fearsome new creatures is the **Mancubus,** a fireball-shooting blob of flesh. Both of the creature's arms release fireballs in quick bursts that inflict serious damage. Because the blasts fly outward at an angle, you can avoid them momentarily by positioning yourself between the two shots. However, you can't sidestep back and forth, because you'll step into the blasts. Instead, use four rockets to blast the Mancubus at a distance, but turn to the quick and powerful plasma launcher if you find yourself in a tight spot. In Mission 16 (Suburbs), it's critical to use the large surrounding structures to avoid the Mancubus' fiery wrath. Get some curve on your rockets by sidestepping in and out of cover; be careful of walls, though.

The Mancubus shoots fireballs from his arm-mounted cannons.

Beware knockout blows from the Revenant.

4 The **Revenant** has a hook like Muhammad Ali and two heat-seeking rocket launchers. One punch steals 25 health points, so don't get close—but use the plasma launcher if you're forced into a brawl. A discharge of 15 units turns a Revenant into a bloody pulp. In Mission 21 (Nirvana), be ready for two of these guys if you use the teleport closest to the three Imps at the entrance. This will drop you behind a U-shaped wall in a circular courtyard. On the other side of the U are a number of former humans. Recklessness on your part while blowing them away will trip a secret door that unleashes a pair of Revenants. Instead, show yourself and then pick off the ex-people with your chaingun. Next, inch around the area's outer wall until the door opens. The Revenants will stream out and give you a clear shot for your rocket or plasma launcher.

Both Former Human Commandos and Hell Knights Inhabit Mission 23, Barrels 'o' Fun.

5 Chaingun-wielding **Former Human Commandos** and **Hell Knights** are instant death in Mission 23 (Barrels 'O' Fun) if you don't know what you're doing. To win, don't think firepower—think stealth. If you take the teleport in the first hall, you'll be dropped in the middle of seven Knights, six Commandos, and a bunch of explosive barrels of toxic waste. Luckily, your foes won't see you right away, so run past some barrels until you have a clear shot down a hall past them. Then hit Shift and burn rubber. The Knights, slightly weaker cousins of the Baron of Hell, will blast a barrel and set off a chain reaction of destruction, annihilating everything in sight—including themselves.

6 If you hated the Lost Souls in the original Doom, **Pain Elementals** will really get on your nerves. These baddies resemble Cacodemons and spit fiery skulls. In Mission 28 (The Spirit World), three Pain Elementals show up with a gaggle of other beasties if you take the hallway facing the entrance. If you have power, the plasma launcher is an ideal defense. It immobilizes Cacodemons and Pain Elementals and reacts quickest to multiple flying objects—including Lost Souls.

Mow down the Pain Elemental with your plasma launcher.

CHEAT TO WIN

If you can't win fair and square, you can always cheat. Doom became famous for its cheat codes, and Doom II keeps things simple by reusing the same ones. Type these codes while playing to get an illegal boost.

iddqd: God mode is a blast. You can't be hurt, except by the Arch-Vile.
idkfa: Running low on ammo? This will give you all the keys and weapons and piles on the munitions and armor.
idclip: Walk through walls for some surprise attacks.
iddt: Instantly display the entire level when viewing the automap. Type it again to see all the creatures and goodies.
iddclev(level number): You thought you'd never make it to the secret level, eh? Type iddclev32.
idbehold (plus one of the following letters):
i: Become Casper the Friendly Ghost for 60 seconds.
s: Like to mangle an Imp with your bare hands? Berserk mode does the trick.
v: Enjoy 30 seconds of invulnerability in a sticky situation.
r: Going to take a plunge into a toxic canal? Do it in style.
a: No more low scores on finding Secrets. This displays the entire map for any level.
l: Shed some light on the situation for two full minutes with the light-amplification goggles.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: INDUSTRY-STANDARD 386 OR HIGHER, WINDOWS 3.1, 4 MB RAM, HARD DRIVE, CD-ROM DRIVE, MODEM

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Magic Carpet

By Bill Meyer

Look, up in the sky! It's a bird. It's a plane. No, it's a rug.

New from Electronic Arts and Bullfrog Productions, Magic Carpet sits you on a woven rocket and lets you zoom over impressive three-dimensional terrain—created as you go—that flows seamlessly beneath you. Your goal: Rid magical worlds of evil wizards by blasting their minions and fortresses while collecting Mana, the currency of power in Magic Carpet. To accomplish your mystical mission, cast dozens of killer spells that set trees ablaze, erect imposing castles, and make the earth shudder.

Magic Carpet will run on a 486 PC, but you really need a Pentium to take full advantage of its charms. That's one reason the title earned *E*^{2}'s Breakthrough Game of the Year award (see "The Second Annual *Electronic Entertainment* Editors' Choice Awards," page 45).

Just watching the landscape unfold and blasting away at everything that moves in Magic Carpet is fun enough. But if you want to keep your rug airborne and have a chance to actually win the game, check out these tips, tricks, and strategies. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; DOS CD, $59.95)

Carpet Combat

- If you find yourself stuck in a swarm of killer bees, cast a Castle spell in the middle of the fray. A level-one castle will emerge from the ground, with archers who will attack the horde; this evens up the odds a bit. Any Mana released by the arrows will be easy pickings for the castle's Mana-gathering balloons. But don't try this if you're near an enemy castle.

- If a bad guy is on your tail, don't turn and face him. Instead, turn the tables by casting an Accelerate spell—if you have it—and hitting reverse. This will shoot you behind him and give you a clear shot.

Flying Your Rug

- For the best aerial action, use the Left and Right Arrow keys in conjunction with the Up and Down Arrow keys. Combinations will let you fly at multiple angles and avoid offensive spells and monsters.
- For faster turns, press the Down Arrow key and the key opposite the direction that you want to turn.
- If you don't have the Accelerate spell, you can get a quick speed burst by turning your carpet left or right with your mouse at a 45-degree angle from where you intend to fly. Then hold down the Left and Right Arrow keys.

Building and Protecting Castles

- Never build a castle next to an opponent's; this will initiate an immediate fight to the death. Besides, you need some room to expand. If you don't put distance between yourself and rival wizards, it will be next to impossible to build all six of a castle's stages.

- If you're being attacked by a pack of phantom warriors or enemy archers from the ground in or near a forest, toss a few fireballs into the treetops. The flames will jump from tree to tree, and the ensuing inferno will quickly turn them to toast. You'll also get a quick supply of Mana.

- Try the old bait and run. Fly up to the creatures you meet so that they'll see you and begin their attack. Immediately hit reverse so you still have them in view, and start firing from a safe distance, using your Fireball or Lightning spells. If you dive right into a battle, you will get caught in the middle of a group of enemies; you then risk becoming susceptible to attacks from multiple sides.

- If your castle is under relentless attack, you can press Shift-L to level it. Then cast another castle spell, and create a new one in the same spot. This new fortification will have a much better chance of fighting off the attack, but it will cost you some Mana. If you have already completed more than one stage of your castle, wait until the attackers have completely destroyed one stage, and then rebuild your castle. This way, you'll be able to rebuild from the previous stage.

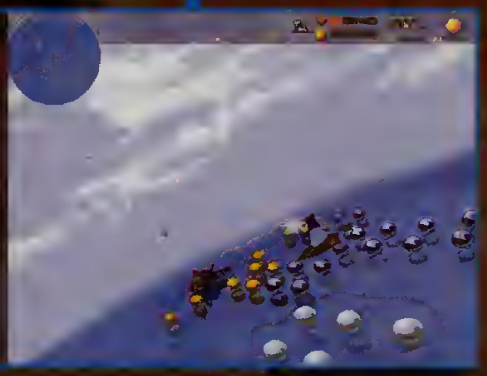
Gathering Mana

- Most of the things you destroy in Magic Carpet release the life force called Mana. The mother's milk of magic, Mana is the key to Magic Carpet. To get Mana that has fallen into steep craters, use your mouse to spiral downward and skim against the walls of the crater, sort of like skateboarding. You'll skid to the bottom and be able to grab the goods.

- To enter deep pits that are too narrow to breach while flying, stop and hover above them. Eventually, you will begin to sink downward into the pit. Use the arrow keys to position yourself, but be careful not to hit the walls, which will shoot you back up and out of the pit.

- If you find yourself battling multiple wizards over a pool of Mana, accelerate to the nearest group of creatures and destroy them. Then grab the creatures' Mana with your Possession spell and accelerate back to the original pool. If done right, the other wizards will fight over the new, smaller pool of Mana you just created, leaving you to grab the original bounty.

- To steal Mana from a wizard hovering over his pool of Mana, concentrate on a single Mana ball. Just after the enemy wizard repossesses it, fire your Possession spell indiscriminately around the pool. While he tries to recover the balls, shoot another Possession spell at the original ball. In the time it takes the wizard to regain all his Mana, your balloon will have arrived and picked up the original ball. Once your balloon is on the scene, start grabbing your rival's Mana as fast as possible until your balloon has grabbed them all.



Attacking Castles

- Another trick is to cast the Teleport spell above a distant enemy castle. This will set the location for your teleport and allow you to zip back and forth from the enemy fortress to your home base to refuel during attacks.

- If your rival's castle is at the foot of a mountain, use the landscape to your advantage. Hide behind the hill and take pot-shots from the rocky cover. The archers won't be able to hit you, and the rival wizard will be forced to come out and fight you in the open.

- When attacking a castle, use the mouse and Left and Right Arrow keys to fly sideways around the walls while firing. During stealth approaches, land at the foot of a castle wall. Archers won't see you.

- If you have a Shield spell and either an Accelerate or Teleport spell, there's a way to destroy a more powerful wizard's castle: Fire at a nearby swarm of creatures, such as griffins, and fly back toward your rival's fortress. Once you are hovering around the enemy castle, start blasting the swarm again. Next, cast your Shield spell for protection, and retreat to the center of the castle. The angered creatures will follow and start attacking you—and the fortress. Finally, accelerate or teleport back home. If done correctly, the castle will be leveled in seconds. Wait until the griffins disperse, and return to collect the Mana.

- Remember, the more Mana you stash in your castle, the more powerful you become—and power is the name of the game in Magic Carpet. Mana lets you add stages to your palace and secure the devastating Earthquake and Volcano spells.

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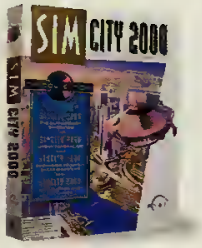

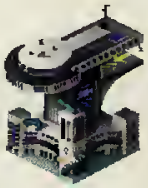

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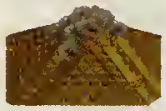

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Hoop Dreams

Finding a fun and realistic five-on-five full-court basketball title has always been a little like heaving a desperation three-pointer: The odds of success are pretty poor. GTE Interactive, the company behind last year's disappointing Jammit, hopes to score a slam dunk with its new Pro Ball '96, due out this June—just in time for this year's NBA finals.

The animated players can't match the resolution of Pro Ball '96's slick backgrounds.

The new game will feature slick, high-resolution, Silicon Graphics-rendered courts and innovative perspectives. You will see reflections in the hardwood, real faces in the stands, and court dimensions based on the NBA rule book.

On the court, you'll control a full five-player squad rendered from motion-captured footage of former collegiate stars Sean Tarver (UCLA) and Marc Boyd (USC). Each player will have approximately 100 different individually altered "states" to depict various moves in the game—jumping, shooting, dribbling, and, of course, dunking. In addition, players will be rated on more than 28 characteristics, including physical and "other" factors.

End views show the realistic detail of the court.

Early versions of the game look terrific, although many game-play issues still remain. GTE is talking to the NBA about a licensing deal that will put professional players and teams in the game instead of generic replacements.

Best of all for hoop fans, Pro Ball '96 won't be the only player on the court. Look for a crop of full-court five-on-five basketball games from several manufacturers later this year. (GTE Interactive; 800-483-8632; DOS, DOS CD, not yet priced)

—*Fredric Paul*

Scouting Report

Gaming News You Can Use

Sony has announced the signing of nearly 100 third-party publishers and developers to produce titles for the PlayStation, the company's next-generation CD-based gaming system. There are some big names on that list, too, including Acclaim, Activision, American Laser Games, Crystal Dynamics, GameTek, LucasArts, Mindscape, Papyrus, Psygnosis, ReadySoft, Sierra On-Line, Spectrum HoloByte, Strategic Simulations, and Virgin Interactive.

The highly cinematic DeathMask from Electric Dreams should be in stores early summer. You begin by playing Jake Hard, a cop on the trail of Neo-City's most notorious criminal, Angel Devoid. Unfortunately, you suffer a bizarre accident right out of *Freaky Friday* and wake up as the hunted, not the hunter. Solve the mystery of your mixed-up identity or perish. Look for it on Windows, Mac and 3DO for $79.95.

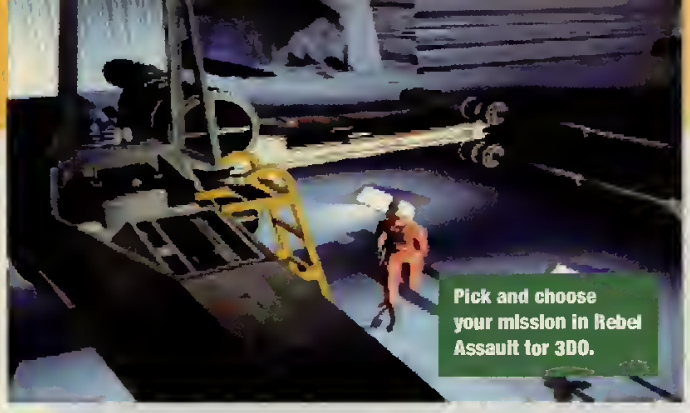
DoMark has entered the sci-fi arena with Absolute Zero and The Orion Conspiracy. In Absolute Zero, you start out as a miner on Saturn's icy moon Europa. Things heat up when an alien race emerges from the moon's icy core. Pilot one of a dozen combat vehicles as a human or extraterrestrial. In The Orion Conspiracy, an adult-oriented sci-fi murder mystery due out in April, you must solve the murder of your son, who was killed on a research station positioned dangerously close to a black hole. Look for both titles on CD-ROM for DOS and PowerMac for $54.95 and $49.95.

American Laser Games has new DOS CD-ROM shooters scheduled for release this year. You'll

Battle it out as a miner or extraterrestrial on Saturn's icy moon Europa in Absolute Zero.

experience even more gun-slinging and finger-twitching action in The Last Bounty Hunter and Fast Draw Showdown. Also, look for Crime Patrol on Mac and Sega CD, Space Pirates on 3DO, and Mad Dog McCree II on Mac CD-ROM.

The surreal adventure G-Nome will appear on



Pick and choose your mission in Rebel Assault for 3DO.

3DO Rebel Assault Passcodes

At the LucasArts title screen:

1. Up-Fire, Down-Fire, Left-Fire, Right-Fire. Listen for LucasArts sound bite.

2. Press "A" until you get to the Main Menu with the PASSCODES option.

3. Select codes.

BOTHAN—Chapter 2, Asteroid Field Training
HERGLIC—Chapter 3, Planet Kolaador
LEENI—Chapter 4, Star Destroyer Attack
THRAWN—Chapter 5, Tatooine Attack
LWYLL—Chapter 6, Asteroid Field Chase
MAZZIC—Chapter 7, Imperial Probe Droids
JULPA—Chapter 8, Imperial Walkers
MORRT—Chaptor 9, Stormtroopors
MUFTAK—Chapter 10, Protect Rebol Transport
RASKAR—Chapter 11, Yavin Training
JHOFF—Chaptor 12, TIE Attack
ITHOR—Chapter 13, Death Star Surface
UMWAK—Chapter 14, Surface Cannon
ORLOK—Chapter 15, Death Star Trench

4. Press "C" at any time while playing to skip to the next level.

LODE RUNNER CHEATS

Mad Monks are the red-cloaked dudes who try to stop you from scooping up gold on Lode Runner's 150 levels. To make Monks your helpless slaves, try these DOS, Windows, and Mac cheats.

DOS VERSION

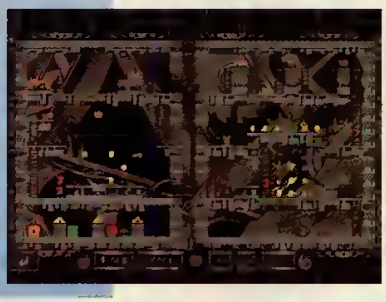
1. Press Control-F3 to activate Monk Mode.
2. Control the Monk with the T-Y-U/G-H-J/B-N-M keys.
3. Press Tab to switch Monks.

WINDOWS VERSION 1.2 AND 1.3

1. Click on the dot in the upper left corner of the Main Menu screens.
2. Type CTHULHU for version 1.2, YOG for version 1.3.
3. Listen for a gong.
4. Control the Monk with the T-Y-U/G-H-J/B-N-M keys.
5. Press Tab to switch Monks.

MAC VERSION

1. Option-click in the upper right corner of the game border.
2. Control the Monk with the Player Two keyboard keys.
3. Press Tab to switch Monks.
4. Option-click in the same spot to return to normal play.



Cheats thanks to Infotainment World Books' new title, *Lode Runner: The Legend Returns Official Players Guide.*

Make Mad Monks do your bidding.

DOS CD-ROM in early summer for $79.95. As war hero Joshua Pullen, you are trying to end your career quietly on planet Ruhelen. Unfortunately, a band of nearly extinct savage beasts aren't making retirement easy. You must cross the Great Canyon and the Span, open the Great West Gate, and blow away these prehistoric beasties in the Complex.

G-Nome is filled with stunning art as well as savage beasts.

Actor Tim Curry will create a monster in Interplay's Gothic thriller **Frankenstein: Through the Eyes of the Monster,** due this spring. Players will play the half-man, half-monster object of Curry's obsession as he experiments with the creative and destructive forces of nature. On a somewhat lighter note, look for other Interplay titles, including **U.S.C.F. Chess,** and **Virtual Pool** later this year.

Don't bother waiting for the sequel to **Betrayal at Krondor** from Sierra On-Line; there won't be one. Instead, 7th Level has signed a deal with Raymond E. Feist, author of the "Riftwar Saga" on which Krondor was based, to produce computer and video games derived from the author's fantasy worlds.

Virtual Vegas is readying **Assault Poker,** sort of the card-players version of BattleChess. Look for the $49.95 disc in July. August will bring **Virtual Vegas 2,** with a high-tech assortment of casino games for $39.95. **CyberHeist,** an adventure game involving a high-tech casino robbery, will ship in November for $59.95.

Finally, **Harbinger** is due by the end of the year. This $69.95 full-motion-video action/adventure will feature an online element. All the new games will run on a variety of computers and advanced gaming systems.

Sega CD will get a boost with the release of DoMark's **Flying Nightmares.** A 3DO version is in the works for a May release at $59.95. DoMark is also working on Sega CD versions of BullFrog's **Syndicate** and **Theme Park** for spring and early summer at $54.95 each.

Blizzard Entertainment has simplified head-to-head play with **Warcraft: Orcs and Humans.** Direct-link, modem, or network players need only one copy of the game to play at the office or across town. Just install the DOS/DOS CD-ROM game on your system, which acts as a server for the other players.

Wing Commander III: Heart of the Tiger

By Al Giovetti

DOS CD

The Bahemoth is the Confederation's planet-killer.

Admiral Tolwyn has motives beyond what you see on the surface.

Wing Commander III: Heart of the Tiger is a bona fide phenomenon. Just the game's 11-minute Hollywood semi-star-studded introduction sequence detailing the war between mankind and the leonine Kilrathi—in full-motion video—will leave you gasping in awe. Why? Because Wing Commander III is one of the first instances of a true "interactive movie," with pulse-pounding action sequences seamlessly integrated with live-action, user-directed cinematics.

A cast of 19 actors put in solid performances Mark Hamill of *Star Wars* fame (see Star Talk, page XX), stars as Colonel Christopher Blair, the rebellious pilot whose actions you control. His taskmaster, Admiral Tolwyn, is played to perfection by movie veteran Malcolm McDowell, who's appeared in films from *A Clockwork Orange* to *Star Trek: Generations*. And Indiana Jones' sidekick, John Rhys-Davies, plays Blair's friend James "Paladin" Taggert.

Wing III's invisible cockpit makes dogfights easier.

But Wing III is more than just video clips; it's also a space-battle simulator. You get to fly five different Confederation ships in both space-based and ground-attack missions against a similar variety of Kilrathi fighters, as well as against several capital ships. Wing III's simulation segments are competent, if slightly less satisfying than LucasArts' TIE Fighter.

The missions are straightforward, with fewer subplots and alternative goals. Fortunately, the game tells you when you've completed your mission objectives, which partially compensates for the vague mission briefings. Also, fans of the earlier Wing Commander games will feel right at home operating the same basic keyboard controls used in previous games in the series.

New features include a slide command that lets you maintain a heading while turning your ship to fire—particularly useful when flying through or by a gigantic capital ship. The enemy and wingman artificial intelligence is also much improved, with three-dimensional tactics taking the battle above and below the plane of flight. And ten in-flight communication options let you direct wingmen, taunt enemies, and check the status of your capital ships.

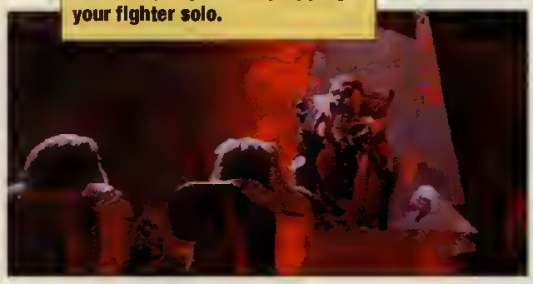
Despite higher-resolution graphics than previous Wing Commanders, performance is quick and smooth. It's not unusual for the Kilrathi to throw 16 fighters and a capital ship into a battle, but if you have a fast 486, you won't notice the graphics slowing down—except when the CD accesses speech files so the characters can talk to you.

During the interactive video segments, Blair is limited to two responses at a time, such as choosing between love interests Rachel and Flint. Decisions can affect how other characters react later on, but more often than not, the choices have little effect on the main plot, which culminates in the invasion of Earth or the destruction of the Kilrathi home world.

At least the game makes you pay attention to the video segments, though, and the seamless blending of full-motion video, interactive 3-D space, and graphical special effects keeps you immersed in the world of Wing Commander III. This state-of-the-art game is a must-see and a must-play.

TIPS

- When encountering Kilrathi, order your wingmen to break and attack immediately. And don't forget to use your missiles.
- You need to win some early missions—including numbers 3, 4, 5, and 6—or you'll lose the game later.
- Go after Flint, or you'll end up with fewer wingmen during the more lethal stages late in the game.
- In the "stealth missile" mission, go after the capital ship, then destroy the missile to complete the mission objectives.
- It never pays to drink and fly.
- If you go to the bar with Rachel and Flint, pay more attention to Rachel, or you'll be prepping your fighter solo.



The cat-like Kilrathi intend to crush the humans and seize Earth.

Wing Commander III: Heart of the Tiger
Origin Systems
800-245-4525

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486DX/50, 8MB RAM, VGA, MS-DOS 5.0, Sound Blaster, double-speed CD-ROM drive
Street Price: $60-$90

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Wing Commander III is a $3 million, four-disc trendsetter that will challenge competitors to keep up. It's expensive, but worth it.

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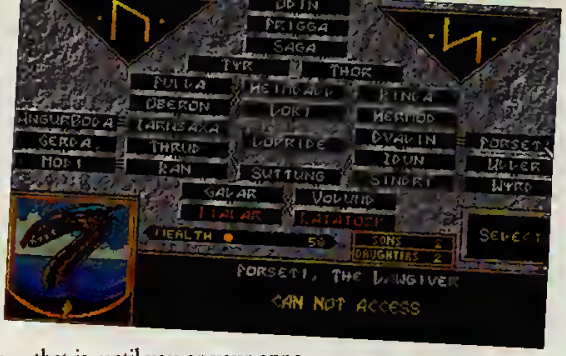
Hammer of the Gods

By Barry Brenesal

DOS CD



Odin needs a mortal to rule by his side as Hammer of the Gods. Are you up to the task?

To find out, load New World Computing's latest turn-based role-player and lead one of four competing Viking races—Human, Elf, Dwarf or Troll—in a bid to garner Odin's favor. You're performing to impress 22 Scandinavian gods watching carefully from their home up in Valhalla. They want to encourage the brave and clever, so each god decrees a quest for each race. The harder quests grant the better stuff, of course: spells, magical blades, extra troops—the usual Viking thing.

You must please many gods before Odin will consider you.

Fight well, or Odin will choose another.

But you can't just go right to the top, triggering All-Father Wotan's Ultimate Quest, on the first day. The deities are arranged in a branching hierarchy, with more powerful figures lurking behind lesser ones. You've got to satisfy the gods' weaponsmith Volund, for example, before you can approach thunder-wielding Thor.

At any time in Hammer, you can pursue one of as many as five potential quests, but there's a catch: Once you trigger any particular quest, you're stuck with it until you succeed. There's no turning back if you decide you don't like the direction you're headed.

Your strategy and tactics are governed in part by the race you choose to play. Elves are expected to subjugate and colonize, but Elven warriors are weak at hand-to-hand combat and have better success with missiles and magic. By comparison, the gods encourage the Trolls to lay waste to everything in sight, and powerful Troll armies regenerate health during battles.

There's plenty to take over or destroy, too. The randomly generated landscape is filled with castles, monasteries, and independent cities. (Independent, that is, until you or your opponents conquer them.) You can negotiate with other players for levels of trade and peace and monitor their relationships with the gods and each other. Beware of breaking treaties in Hammer, however, because it damages your honor; that displeases the gods and brings in fewer recruits when you pillage some unfortunate town.

For the most part, Hammer looks top-notch. The Super VGA artwork is superb and well-animated, showing you a top-down view. Battles switch to a two-dimensional field, where clashing forces take turns slinging merry mayhem.

The lack of visuals for Hammer's god-supplied weapons and armor is a drawback, however. There's nothing to see, just a short description when you click on a nondescript hero: "Dwarven Doom Axe +4." Is that anyway to treat a sacred relic? It might as well be a Ginsu knife.

But the generic weapons are the only limitation to this endlessly reconfigurable good time. You can even set separate difficulty levels for the game and each computerized opponent. Better still, add a friend into the mix via modem, and then beat the Nordic daylights out of him. What do you care? In Hammer of the Gods, life's tough, but Vikings are tougher.

TIPS

- The Dwarf leader needs plenty of money to succeed. If you're not playing as the Dwarves, it makes sense to grant him only very limited trade.
- Don't take on any quests to attack a monastery until you first locate one. On the game's randomized map, the nearest one could be right around the corner or halfway across the world.
- Let your lesser fighters soften up the opposition in combat, then bring in your heroes. The latter are very hard to come by, and no one else can wield the magical god-derived weapons you receive.
- Don't accept Troll offers to mutually attack a third party. The Trolls gain points by wreaking havoc all around, so you're doing their job without gaining any lasting benefits.
- If you need several village raids to complete a quest, don't assume they have to be different villages. Attack the same one on successive turns.

Hammer of the Gods
New World Computing
800-325-8898

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 386, 4M8 RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, mouse
List Price: $69.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

This turn-based explore-and-conquest game of Viking lore boasts superb graphics and modem play.

Menzoberranzan

By Al Giovetti

DOS
DOS CD

Drizzt Do' Urden, the turncoat dark elf, first appeared in R. A. Salvatore's inaugural novel, *The Crystal Shard,* in 1988. Seven years, three novel trilogies, and several best-seller lists later, Drizzt now stars in his own computer game.

Menzoberranzan opens with a cinematic sequence that shows a small party of adventurers defeating a dragon. But their celebration is interrupted by an unexpected raid on their town. The Drow, a race of evil dark elves that live underground in a society of hate and deception, have left their caves to enslave the surface dwellers. But that is only part of what they seek; the Drow also hope to entrap Drizzt, a dark elf who has rejected their evil ways and joined the side of good.

The gameplay section begins when you either select two previously created characters or roll your own. You can then join with as many as two other non-player characters to travel to Menzoberranzan, the home of the dark elves, to free the captives. Your quest eventually also becomes entangled with that of Drizzt, though he actually lends his formidable talents to your party for only a short time.

Menzoberranzan is full of innovations. It combines a first-person, wide-angle, Doom-like display with real-time combat against 31 different types of monsters for nonstop action. A "talk or fight" option almost always gives you a diplomatic alternative to war. You can also print indexed automaps and conversations to review at your convenience. Not only that, you can edit seven of the twelve player statistics to reproduce favorite characters from other Advanced Dungeons and Dragons games. And if you don't like the free-scrolling motion, simply select the Step option to move one square at a time.

When diplomacy fails, force of arms prevails.

Inventory is an easy matter.

Players still saving for the latest hardware will appreciate the fact that the game's graphics look like Super VGA but work fine on standard VGA monitors; the many ultra-high-resolution animated sequences are attractive as well.

Sounds are up to snuff, too. The context-sensitive musical score morphs into tribal rhythms as your party descends deeper into the Drows' Underdark world. And the conversations in Menzoberranzan are spoken by talented actors drawn from professional theater groups.

Well-scripted and well-designed, Menzoberranzan is a sure bet to please role players.

You can avoid most battles if you're willing to talk.

Menzoberranzan
Strategic Simulations
4D8-737-68DD

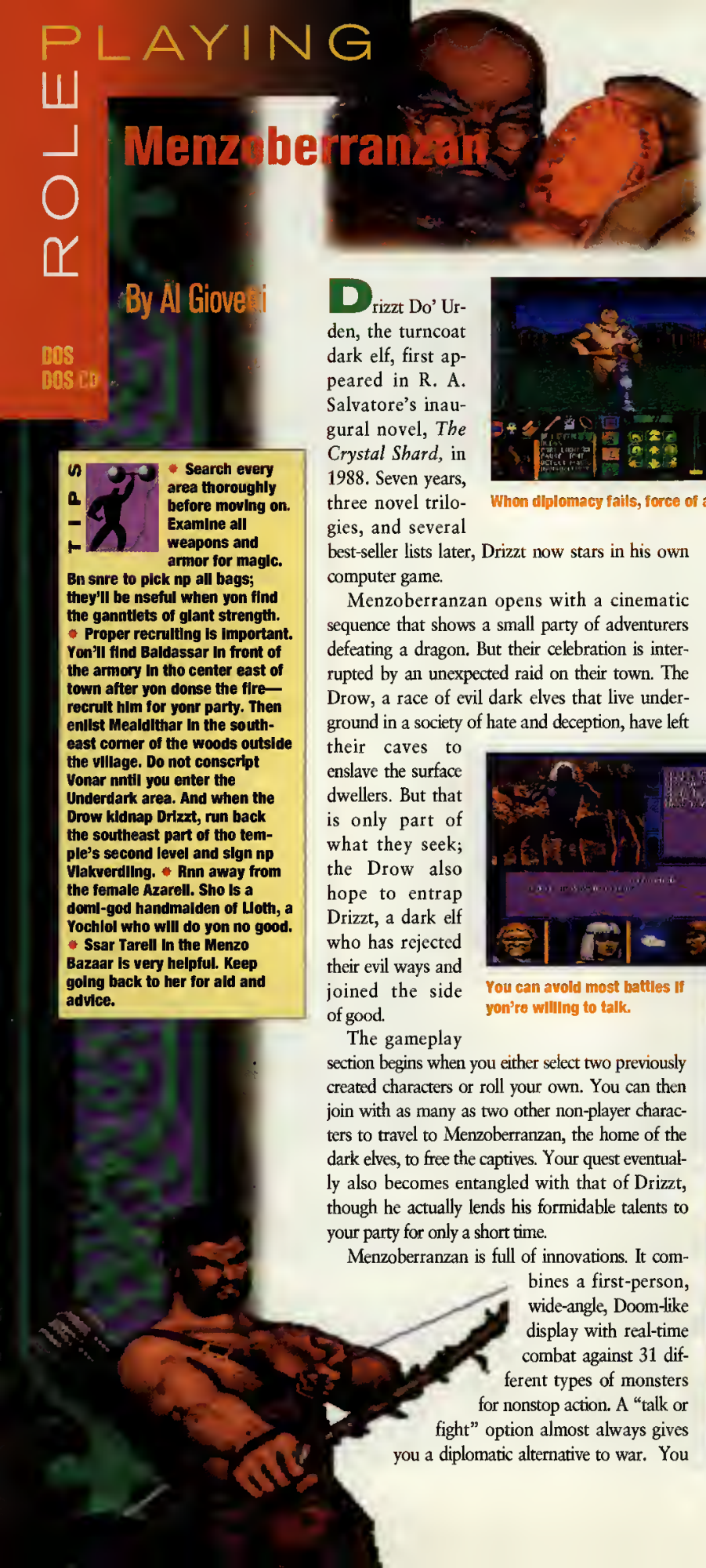
Platform: DOS, DOS CD
Requires: 386/4D, 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0, double-speed CD-ROM drive, sound card, mouse
List Price: $69.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

High-quality role-playing meets fast-paced first-person exploration and spectacular real-time combat in Menzoberranzan.

TIPS

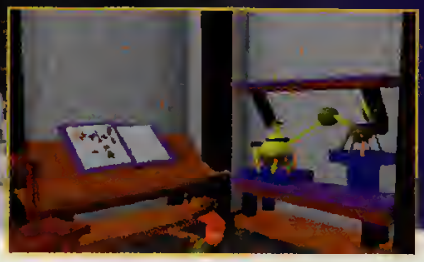
- **Search every area thoroughly before moving on. Examine all weapons and armor for magic. Be sure to pick up all bags; they'll be useful when you find the gauntlets of giant strength.**
- **Proper recruiting is important. You'll find Baldassar in front of the armory in the center east of town after you douse the fire—recruit him for your party. Then enlist Mealdithar in the southeast corner of the woods outside the village. Do not conscript Vonar until you enter the Underdark area. And when the Drow kidnap Drizzt, run back the southeast part of the temple's second level and sign up Viakverdling.**
- **Run away from the female Azarell. She is a demi-god handmaiden of Lloth, a Yochlol who will do you no good.**
- **Ssar Tarell in the Menzo Bazaar is very helpful. Keep going back to her for aid and advice.**



Ecstatica: A State of Mind

By John Sauer

You can't always beat every monster. Sometimes it's best to run for cover.



Follow the formula to make the squirrel spell. A rodent can go where a person can't.

Only you can set tha possessed maid free and save what's left of the town.

Little girls' dreams aren't always sweet. Sugar and spice and everything nice are liable to rip your head off—or worse—in Ecstatica: A State of Mind, the latest action/adventure game from Psygnosis.

You play as a thirsty traveler (male or female) who stops in the village of Tirich for a glass of water. Tirich is a modest little hamlet with all the standard features of an Olde English village: castle, wizard, monastery, dungeons, and so on. Unfortunately, the town is in disarray and full of strange monsters, most of which can kill you with just a few blows.

Where did the monsters come from? It seems the wizard's young maid stole a magic book and conjured a demon. The creature possessed her body and soul and let the beings from her nightmares loose on the town. You must free Tirich from her thrall, or die trying—and you can expect to die often.

Finding the maid is no problem: She's under the town chapel. Freeing her is another matter. To rescue the poor girl from the demon, you must read spell books, listen to an assortment of non-player characters, find weapons, fight monsters, and solve plenty of puzzles.

While far from perfect, Ecstatica is a lot of fun. The game's look is reminiscent of I-Motion's Alone in the Dark, but your character and other critters are much more rounded and fully textured. The interface is simple and easy to use: The numeric keypad controls movement and fighting, while function keys let you sneak, walk, and run. The puzzles are challenging, creative, and sometimes hilarious. For instance, complete the squirrel spell, and the rodent's roly-poly walking motion will have you in stitches. But mess up, and you'll find yourself hanging on a meathook behind a bar while the monsters yuk it up at your expense.

The game does have a few problems. Obvious graphics bugs let your character move through walls, objects, and other characters. Occasional sound glitches crop up, too. In fact, one flaw is actually considered a feature: As you move through the town, the game alters its "camera perspective"—sometimes close-up, sometimes overhead. The change in perspective lends visual interest, but it can also be confusing and slow; you can easily get clobbered while you're frantically trying to reorient yourself.

Finally, the game's graphical complexity means that it plays best off the hard drive, but a full installation eats up 40MB or so of storage. Psygnosis might have done a little more testing to fine-tune Ecstatica's mechanics. However, the polished game play makes this title worthy of any adventurer's attention.

Sometimes a little prayer can help—but not always.

Ecstatica: A State of Mind
Psygnosis
800-438-7794

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/25, 4M8 RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, VGA, sound card, mouse
List Price: $59.99

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

Small flaws aside, beautiful—but buggy—graphics and a load of intriguing puzzles enhance Ecstatica's solid game play.

TIPS

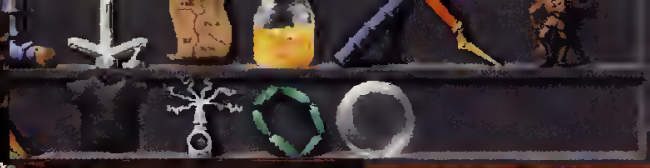
• Give the little girl her teddy bear. • You'll find the ingredients for the squirrel spell in the chapel (man-shaped roof), the storeroom (hop-like plant), and on the road to the monastery (red flower). • The wolf creature is almost impossible to kill. If you land a few good blows, run away while you can. • Your right hand delivers a slashing cut; your left conveys an overhead strike. You'll need both to win. • Read the books in the monastery. • Make sure the game's subtitles are on. The sound is good, but read the text so you don't miss important clues.

Death Gate

By Barry Brenesal

DOS CD

Death Gate's puzzles won't keep you busy for long.



Enjoy the locations you see. There aren't too many of them in Death Gate.

Let's be blunt: Legend Entertainment's Death Gate is a graphics adventure overflowing with boring fantasy clichés. You've got your vanished-race-of-superior-wizards riddle, your realms-sundered-by-a-broken-talisman theme, elves and humans at war, and some cutesy dwarves brought in for comic relief. It goes downhill from there.

Fantasy clichés is the name of this game.

Don't look for novel plot twists or intriguing characters to bring it all to life, either. When your character's magnanimous savior, Lord Xar, turns into a slavering Hitler-type every time he mentions the Sartans (they banished your people into the dangerous Labyrinth generations ago), you'll know instantly from his overreaction that the Sartans are really beneficent types. Two hours into the game, I was shouting at both Xar and Haplo (your character) to stop reading the bad script and review the evidence instead.

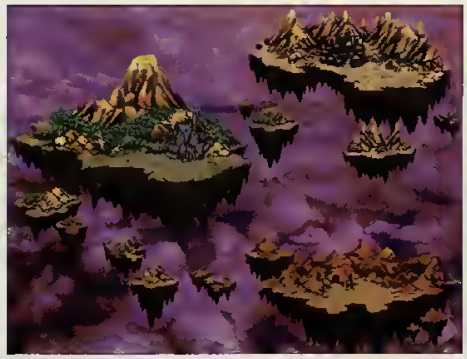
Bad writing, hackneyed adventure elements—so why bother with Death Gate at all? The graphics, lad, the graphics. Death Gate is filled with dazzling Super VGA images and excellent animated sequences. The sound is compelling, too, with digitized voices and atmospheric music.

It's great stuff. The visuals provide distinction on every screen through their overall composition and wealth of detail and color. The animated cut scene of Haplo's ship traveling across dimensional space is spectacular enough to do a major film studio proud.

Graphics like Death Gate's require hefty amounts of development time, however, so the programmers left out scrolling landscapes and kept the number of visuals to a minimum. This leads to a curious contradiction—a tale of vast scope and visual beauty with few places to go and not much to do.

You'll sneak into a large, expensively appointed mansion, but find that you can explore only a single image in a single room. And when you enter Emperor Kleitus' Palace on the planet Abarrach, you jump to a very small shot showing only Kleitus' upper torso. The result is visual ambiance for Kleitus, certainly, but none at all for anything else in the room.

Death Gate's puzzles are similarly undeveloped—simpler than most competing games from Legend, Sierra, or Virgin. Plus, while there's a lot of dialog, you just listen to it instead of directing it. Also, you can't use the spells you acquire and cast for alternative solutions to the same situation: There are no multiple paths to success in this game.



Beautiful scenery abounds in Death Gate.

Think of Death Gate as a bad novel with brilliant illustrations and indifferent puzzles. If artwork alone can grab you, go for it. Otherwise, take a pass on this one.

Death Gate
Legend Entertainment
800-658-8891

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 386/33, 4MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, VGA, Sound Blaster, mouse
List Price: $59.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

Spectacular illustrations can't redeem this game's cliché-ridden storyline and mediocre puzzles.

TIPS

- Don't overstay your welcome the first time you board the elven ship—four or five turns at the most—or the guard will discover you.
- Remember the Graphics Adventure Litany: Pick up everything that isn't nailed down, and scan the screen for anything that can be individually looked at or talked to.
- Some objects, like the Love Poems found on Arianus, come in handy during later episodes—for such important tasks as helping a lovesick Pryan prince.
- Avoid the attack option whenever possible. Haplo dies easily.

Win CD

The Vortex: Quantum Gate II

Illyra will fight for you—if she believes you can be trusted.

By Barry Brenesal

The year is 2057, and Earth's ecosystem is collapsing. In a desperate bid for survival, Earth's government has sent troops through an experimental Quantum Gate to another world, where they hope to mine a vital ore needed to save their ravaged planet. But huge, carnivorous insects await them on the other side. During an attack on an insect colony, Private Drew Griffin's ecosuit is breached, but before his "top hat" VR helmet can euthanize its occupant, Drew rips off the helmet and collapses.

He awakens in a forest among a society called the Aylinde, which resembles some southwestern native American tribes. These humans, whom Drew and his pals were killing under the drug-and-virtual-reality-induced impression that they were insects, possess large pairs of angelic wings—and a real attitude towards their genocidal invaders.

You can't always believe what you see in Vortex.

The Aylinde can be your friends or toes, depending on the choices you make.

So begins The Vortex: Quantum Gate II, HyperBole Studios' sequel to last year's Quantum Gate. But don't expect traditional gaming: Like Quantum Gate, there are no object puzzles, no magic to cast, and no dragons to blast out of the northern skies.

Vortex is an interactive mini-movie, and you make choices at a few critical junctures to alter the course of the film. Your contribution is limited to short explorations and question-and-answer sessions with other characters. But depending on your actions, Drew may end up attempting to destroy the Gate, or trying to protect it against a native onslaught. (He'll have good reasons for either goal.) Playing time is relatively short—less than an hour—but there are five major alternate conclusions and a few minor subpaths you can explore to stretch out the game play.

One of Vortex's best elements are the stellar performances of the cast. The acting here easily outclasses anything else you'll see on CD-ROM. Vortex's characters are real enough to make you care about what happens to the people in writer/director Greg Roach's script. That's practically a first in this genre, and other game companies using live actors should pay attention.

The story itself dwells less on the looming confrontation than on Drew's growing sense of conflicting loyalties. Earth's government is ruthless if well-intentioned, but the native Aylinde people have abilities that dwarf Drew's, and they suspect his every move. Whom should he help—and how?

The sheer size of Vortex's video, though, means that even on three CDs, the number of branching stories are few. And that's the game's flaw: For all its considerable directorial and acting expertise, it can't quite convince you that PC-based hardware is completely ready to handle multipath, full-motion video adventures. You often have to sit through annoying pauses, even on a fast 486 with a good disk cache.

Vortex is not really a game, but an excellent, slightly interactive movie for your computer. It's a chance to participate in an unusually well-produced story, with cutting-edge graphics and a superb soundtrack (by the all-female new-age group D'Cuckoo). You'll like the ride through The Vortex: Quantum Gate II.

The Vortex: Quantum Gate II
HyperBole Studios
800-989-3767

Platform: Win CD
Requires: 486SX, 8MB RAM, Windows 3.1, sound card, mouse, VGA, double-speed CD-ROM drive
Street Price: $50

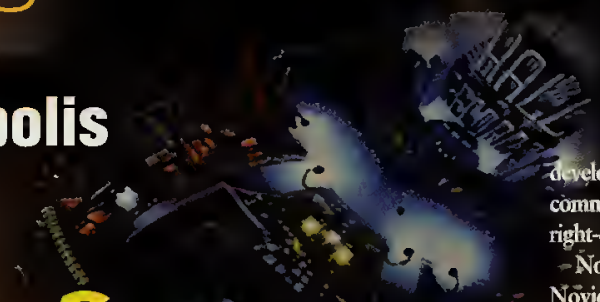
GAME PLAY:	★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

Not a traditional game, The Vortex is instead an unusually well-done interactive movie.

TIPS

- Vortex's visuals show up best at 800-by-600 resolution with 16 million colors—but reduce it to 640-by-480 with 256 colors if the video clips run too slowly.
- When you finish, go back and do it again. Try every option in the movie. You can't lose or win; you just find new paths through Drew's life.

Noctropolis



Welcome to the city of the night.

By Rick Raymo

Seduction, heroic deeds, arch-villains, and heated battle against darkness and death—you get all this and more when you play Noctropolis from Electronic Arts. Melding spectacular comic book-style art, rotoscoped character movement, and digitized actors, this adventure game gives grown-up gamers the chance to become Darksheer, a crime fighter who is the only hope for the city of the night.

Things don't start out so glamorous. Peter Grey has problems: His wife has left him, his bookstore is failing, and worst of all, his favorite comic book series has ground to a halt. He's even having disturbing nightmares. Nothing is going right for the poor sod.

Suddenly, the doorbell rings, and Grey discovers that he has won the grand prize in a sweepstakes to become the new Darksheer. Completely unprepared, he's dropped into the world of Noctropolis to contend with characters like Father Desmond, the good priest; Succubus, the lingerie-wearing, demon-infested nun; Stiletto, Darksheer's curvaceous sidekick; and Master Macabre, who offers unnecessary surgery without benefit of anesthesia.

You get a terrifically true-to-form comic book intro.

Noctropolis is a tried-and-true adventure-style game made up of item collection, conversation paths, and puzzles. The twist is that EA built Noctropolis to take advantage of the latest multimedia toys. You get tons of high-quality mood music, your interaction with live actors occurs through high-quality (though smallish) video, and the vast majority of the dialog materializes as digitized speech.

Acting talent is a mixed bag, however; some of the stars are terrific, others patently awful. Fortunately, even the bad acting (as in the portrayal of Stiletto by Hope Marie Carlton) comes off as B-movie silly instead of grating and annoying.

Tophat puts on a grisly show at the Opera.

The interface is a fairly comfortable point-and-click affair. A right-click calls up a command pyramid that displays your options. Unfortunately, the developers don't offer a mouse-based shortcut for a common command like Look. Instead, you must right-click to call up the pyramid each time.

Noctropolis is great fun, but not terribly deep. Novice players will get lots of engrossing hours, but hard-core adventurers will find the whole experience to be a pleasant walk in the park. You use virtually every item you collect, and putting them to work doesn't require any specific action: Just click Use, click on the item, and, if you are in the correct room, your character does whatever he's supposed to do. There aren't many puzzles, and the ones that exist should take only a short while to master.

Noctropolis is targeted at a mature audience. In addition to the adult themes, there's a small amount of nudity, some implied sex, and some graphic comic-book violence. Art lovers should go wild over the astounding, if somewhat static, hand-painted backgrounds. The only drawback is that the whole thing is over relatively quickly. If there's a sequel to Noctropolis, players should hope for a much bigger adventure next time.

TIPS

- The guy in the Hall of Records is tough to spot. He's the little shadow under the big TV screen.
- The places you need to go won't appear on the map unless you ask someone about them.
- Break into the observatory with one of Greenthumb's pets.
- Stiletto's scenery gets you past the watchman and helps you with the maintenance man.
- This tip is more than politically incorrect—it approaches misogynistic—but the best way to impress Stiletto is to return her hits pound for pound, and then kiss her.
- Make Dreamer's clown sneeze and paint your way out.

Noctropolis
Electronic Arts
800-245-4525

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 386/33, MS-DOS 5.0, 4MB RAM
List Price: $49.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

Novice heroes will have a great time with the enjoyable game play and terrific video and art. But stronger players may find that it all ends too quickly.

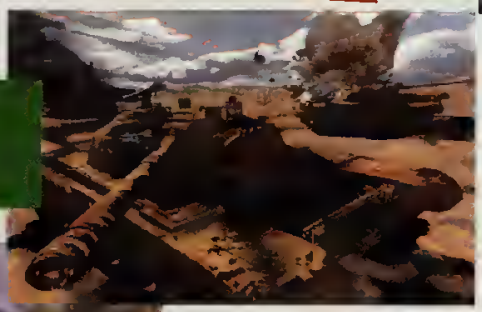
Armored Fist

DOS
DOS CD

That blur in the view is supposed to be an enemy tank. Better trust your instincts and kill it.

Fuel tanks are easy to blow away in training. Things get tougher when someone's shooting back.

By Shane Mooney



The Eastern Bloc forces have an advantage in numbers but are stuck with inferior tanks.

This is what'll happen to you nine times out of ten until you've spent serious time inside your armor.

If you've always wondered what it'd be like to be trapped inside an iron coffin with a dozen Russian tanks barreling down on you, you're in luck. NovaLogic's Armored Fist—the much-ballyhooed follow-up to the megahit helicopter sim, Comanche—can put you in the turret of an M1A2 Abrams and keep you there through the blast and fire of blazing battles.

You start out in this real-time tank warfare game commanding one unit and gradually work up to as many as four platoons, each with up to four vehicles (that's sixteen tanks, for those of you keeping count). After some basic training, you should be ready to engage the enemy (be it Eastern or Western) in some serious digital destruction.

You can drive the Abrams, M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicles, Russian T-80s, or BMP armored personnel carriers on missions straddling various locations and terrain. The forests of Europe, the deserts of the Middle East, and the rocky, desolate spaces of Turkey all can impede or enhance your strategy. And you can really take advantage of the geography: Hide in creek beds or behind hills, or even dig in for "hull down" protection that leaves just your turret showing.

The game also comes with a complex mission builder that lets you create anything from a simple scenario to a sophisticated battle plan. You can start from scratch and choose the terrain and the targets, or modify one of the 40 included missions.

Despite these wonderful features, Armored Fist is still a little disappointing. Like Comanche, the game uses NovaLogic's Voxel Space graphics technology. According to the company, the technique manipulates "voxels," or volume pixels, to produce "the industry's most realistic game graphics." But the resulting graphics from this "state-of-the-art" technology will make you pine for the good ol' days of Gouraud shading and polygon-based images found in TIE Fighter and other games. Yes, the interiors of the tanks look very realistic and the animated movies that serve as intermissions are truly incredible, but the actual Voxel Space battlefield graphics are abysmal. Half the time you can't tell a tank from a tree, and if it weren't for the target lock control, you'd end up bombing sagebrush instead of satellite dishes.

The confusing graphics don't help a difficulty level that flirts with the impossible. When you're in charge of more than one vehicle, you need to jump from one tank to another, relying on the game's artificial intelligence to control your unmanned vehicles. You may find it a relief when all but one of your vehicles are destroyed so you can fully focus on the battle.

Still, if you were one of the myriad fans of Comanche but complained about a lack of difficulty and depth, then Armored Fist may be just the game for you.

TIPS

- Don't fail to realize the importance of air support and artillery in any mission.
- Don't rely on just your main cannon. Be sure to take advantage of smoke grenades and your machine gun.
- Examine a battle from the CCV (Command and Control Vehicle) before you play. That way, you can avoid paths that go through mine fields or bad guys.
- If your PC has lots of RAM (more than 5MB), you can improve the graphics a little by disabling DDS5's SmartDrive and loading the game with the -S option; Type LDADGAME -S FIST.RUN. If you have enough memory, you'll see the words "Loading Mission with Super High Detail" on the screen.

When the sun goes down, it's time to turn on the night vision.

Armored Fist
NovaLogic
818-88D-1997

Platform: DOS, DDS CD
Requires: 386/40, 4MB RAM, DOS 3.3, VGA, mouse
List Price: DDS, $64.95; DOS CD, $69.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

Despite mediocre graphics and frustratingly difficult game play, Armored Fist is a pretty decent game.

Metaltech: EarthSiege

It's bad news when the metal starts to fly.

By Vox Day

DOS
DOS CD

An overhead view lets you strategize.

BUGS

Although EarthSiege supposedly supports the Thrustmaster FCS and WCS Mark II joysticks, those controllers didn't work on our test system. We had to select a standard joystick from the control options and then program the custom functions ourselves.

TIPS

• The legs are a Herc's biggest weakness. Rather than wasting your ammo on the heavily armored torso, aim straight at the legs; you'll bring the sucker down faster and also ensure greater salvage. • Most of a Herc's weapons point forward. If you can manage to maneuver behind your enemy, you'll be able to take your time picking your shots without taking a beating. Unfortunately, the Cybrids seem aware of their vulnerability, so this tactic is easier said than done. • Remember that when your Herc is in reverse, the right-left direction of the joystick is switched. Forgetting this will get you in a lot of trouble. • Don't worry too much about the flying landskimmers. Their weapons don't pack much punch, and you're liable to get mauled by a Cybrid if you're walking around with your turret pointing up in the air. Deal with the Hercs first, the gun towers second, and the skimmers last.

What is it about large robots hammering away at each other that we love so much? I suppose it's the sheer joy of blasting the bad guy with 50mm autocannon and high-powered lasers at close range. If you're a fan of this kind of high-tech carnage, Dynamix's Metaltech: EarthSiege offers a variation on the tried-and-true Battletech theme.

EarthSiege looks great. The terrain has a nice, hazy appearance, and the Hercs—as the robots are called—are well-designed, with fairly intricate detail. There are 12 different types of Hercs listed in the documentation, but you'll encounter at least three others that don't match any pictures in the manual; I particularly liked a four-legged model that closely resembles the giant AT-ATs from *The Empire Strikes Back*. It's just too bad that Dynamix didn't go with a better graphics technology for the terrain, which would have really added some depth to the game's overall look.

On the other hand, both the sound effects and music are excellent. The evocative music sets the stage well, while the big, industrial sounds lend an air of thundering importance. Jack your Sound Blaster into a decent speaker system, and EarthSiege will make anyone on your block think World War III has begun.

You play in either single-mission or career mode. Single-mission mode lets you pick your battles. Career mode follows the now-familiar storyline of intelligent machines—called Cybrids—gone baywire and declaring war on the human race. Once inside your Herc, the cockpit is almost as complicated as you'd expect it to be in the real thing. But EarthSiege plays much more like an arcade game than a simulation. For example, unlike in the original Mechwarrior or Virtual World's Battletech, overheating is not an issue. While it's awfully nice not to have to worry about a Herc dying of heat stroke, that missing touch makes the game much less realistic.

Unfortunately, the emphasis on game play over realism does not extend to the joystick controls. If you use only one joystick or the keyboard, the four-direction turret positioning controls share the same keys with the movement of the Herc itself. You can get used to it, but it takes a while. That's a shame, because the whole issue could easily have been avoided with a more traditional setup of designated separate keys for movement and turret motion.

Overall, Metaltech: EarthSiege is a good game that disappoints only because it contains the elements of a great game—but doesn't quite deliver on its promise.

Metaltech: EarthSiege
Dynamix
800-757-7707

Platform: DOS, DOS CD
Requires: 386/33, 4MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, VGA
List Price: $69.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

Metaltech: EarthSiege is the mech game of the moment. But the awkward interface sometimes feels as if it was designed by a mad scientist.

U.S. Navy Fighters

DOS CD

This game looks good even at lower resolutions.

By Al Giovetti

Way back in 1991, Electronic Arts released Chuck Yeager's Air Combat, which still thrives on thousands of PC and Mac hard drives.

Now, expectations are sky-high for U.S. Navy Fighters, backed by three of Chuck's chief creative influences—game programmer and designer Brent Iverson, producer Paul Grace, and music and effects man George Sanger. The verdict? U.S. Navy Fighters won't disappoint you.

The new game adds to the great Air Combat feel with features such as an "invisible cockpit" and pop-up multifunction displays, plus improved graphics and a plot (Boris Yeltsin's been ousted, and Russia is looking for more territory). Use the rear-view mirrors to supplement the 33-plus views of the action, including a tracking view and external aircraft views. You also get the unique slew view, which simulates what you'd see if you turned your head in a real cockpit.

Fans of the original may miss the World War II vintage Mustangs and Messerschmirts—not to mention Chuck warning you with "Bandit on your six!" But instead of a puny P-51, you get to fly five advanced Russian and American jet fighters, including the F-14, F/A-18, F-22, A-7, and Su-33, and you share the sky with 30 other warplanes.

Enemy and wingman artificial intelligence has also improved. Computer pilots can now perform three-dimensional and specialized moves such as going vertical to avoid attacks—or to get on your tail. You even direct your wingmen with 19 different commands and can respond to AWACS-designated targets.

As usual, flight fanatics will argue about the realism of the flight model, but novices will appreciate the many ease-of-play features that let them adjust the challenge to suit individual skills and preferences. Pilots who want to play without exhaustive training can mine an extensive "cheat" menu that offers 100% magnification (the better to simulate 20/10 "Yeagervision"), invincible aircraft, and unlimited fuel and ammo.

The 50 preset and 50 custom missions run the gamut from caps to strikes, with quick and pro mission generators that adjust more than 15 general pilot artack parameters and individual pilot skills—plus the customary waypoints and multiple mission objectives.

With five levels of texture-mapped graphics—from 320-by-200 to 1024-by-768—you can match graphics detail to your computer's horsepower. The highest resolution sets new standards for realism, with plane insignias and even nose art plainly visible. More than 40 minutes of full-motion video briefings, newscasts, mission planning, and ready-room conversations help set the stage, aided by a slick digital soundtrack.

But even U.S. Navy Fighters falls a bit short of perfection. The game doesn't support some popular joysticks, including the CH Products Flightstick Pro. It also leaves out trim adjustment commands and control-surface movement. Also, although Electronic Arts says it's working on multiplayer support via network or modem, right now you're flying on your own. But start practicing against the computer now so you'll be ready for head-to-head action when it finally arrives.

TIPS

- **The Track While Scan radar mode varies by plane and will target at 150 miles for the F-14 and F-22, 100 miles for the Su-33, and 25 miles for the F/A-18, A-7, and F-104—regardless of the range of your missiles.**
- **Don't use HARMs to take out SAMs. Mavericks are much easier to use and they're more reliable.**
- **The F-14 is especially deadly against air threats, because it comes equipped with long-range radar and can carry ten air-to-air missiles.**
- **Use the mirrors for a quick "check six" rather than changing your view to look behind you.**

Live-action video segments provide briefings that help advance the game's plot.

Choose your weapon and take to the skies!

U.S. Navy Fighters
Electronic Arts
800-245-4525

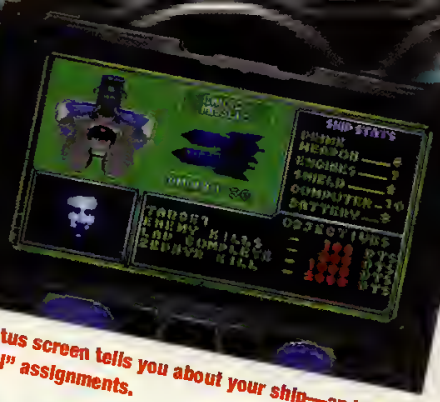
Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486DX2, 4MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, Super VGA, mouse
List Price: $49.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

For realistic, high-resolution, in-your-face dogfighting action, U.S. Navy Fighters can't be beat.

Zephyr

DOS CD



The status screen tells you about your ship—and any "special" assignments.

By Alfred C. Giovetti

In the far future, the United Planetary Coalition government is merely ceremonial. Six megacorporations secretly control the universe, and these techno-pirates settle their disputes over territory and contracts in the arenas of the Interplanetary Battle Circuit, with company champions piloting hovering battle tanks known as Zephyrs.

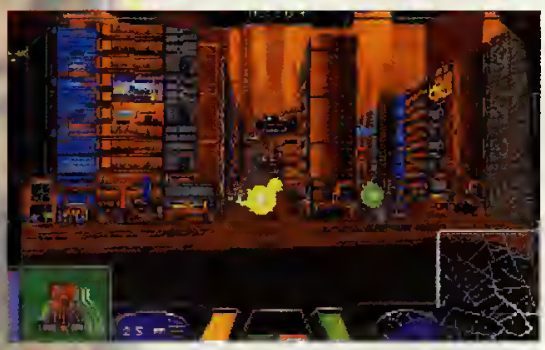
A variety of locals provide pre-race info.

That's the tale behind Zephyr, a smooth-scrolling, fast-paced racing/combat game in which you fight in 48 arenas on eight worlds. Each world has its own look, and the choices include ice, desert, rainforest, and even an aquatic world where you fight completely under water.

Choose the company you race for carefully. Each has its benefits.

Unfortunately, the landscapes don't significantly change the combat. All six of the competing Zephyr hovertanks look alike, with only color-coded accents to identify their allegiances to one of the six megacorps. Each Zephyr also has a double-barreled turret-mounted gun. The turret movement is controlled by keyboard, joystick, or—if you're lucky enough to have one—a head-tracking virtual reality headset. All Zephyrs are also initially equipped with 50 missiles.

It's a mad, mad, virtual world out there.



Ten special Zephyr equipment enhancements, including Pulse Cannons, Nuke Missiles, and a Nitro speed boost, are randomly scattered in some arenas. You also receive megacorp-specific equipment bonuses, such as more powerful engines and stronger shields, depending on whose colors you choose to fly under. Once in the arena, the fast-and-furious three-dimensional combat logs points for hits on enemies and other targets while reducing totals for lost ships.

New World Computing built Zephyr on the current Heroes of Might & Magic game engine, which provides smooth-scrolling, colorful graphics. Professional actors deliver humorous pre- and post-race audio commentary and interviews. And an original techno and rock 'n' roll soundtrack plays along while you fight it out on the circuit. The remarkable thing about this game is that it works on slower 486 machines, single-speed CD-ROM drives, and VGA monitors while simultaneously managing to retain an exceptional smoothness and beauty.

Your computer-controlled enemies are smart, too. Three-part artificial intelligence controls how the computer Zephyrs patrol, pursue, and evade. Individual pilot personalities give each opponent a distinctive style. Plus, the other racers keep playing the game and scoring points even if you run and hide. While our version didn't have it, a free support patch for network, phone line, and null modem will let you face off against even more devious human opponents.

So strap in, and enjoy this graphically attractive VR ride.

Zephyr
New World Computing
800-325-8898

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486, 4M8 RAM, DOS 5.0, VGA
List Price: $49.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

Zephyr is a graphically attractive, ultra-smooth scrolling race game that resembles a flight simulator as much as an arcade game.

TIPS

- Lay back at the beginning of the race and shoot the faster tanks from behind.
- Seek and destroy enemy Zephyrs as they approach corners, where they tend to get confused and stop momentarily.
- Watch out for guns that fire at you from hiding places in the beautiful scenery.

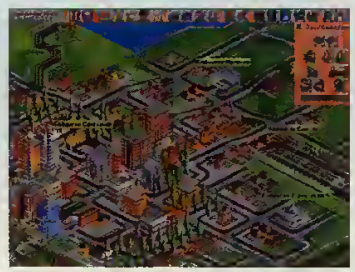
Transport Tycoon

By David Israels

DOS CD
DOS

In the game's later stages, planes terrying passengers over long distances will really rake in the bucks.

Quaintly named hamlets such as Invenley blossom into large towns serviced by trains and airplanes.



Your transportation empire is only a mouse-click away with the game's easy-to-use window system.

Before you know it, Transport Tycoon will have you working on the railroad—and lots more—all the live-long day. This visually stunning strategy/sim from MicroProse is a game addict's delight.

The heart of Transport Tycoon is simple: Build it, and they will come. Over the game's 100 years, you construct a huge transit network across a randomly generated game world. As you do, hamlets with wacky British names like Wronfingfield and Pludingstone grow and snake across the game map, linked by hundreds of zooming trains, soaring planes, bustling trucks, and lumbering ships.

As president of a fledgling transportation company, you're in charge of designing and erecting the links that best exploit the game's vast world of towns, factories, power stations, and raw material sites—all of it displayed in Super VGA graphics with artwork that rivals SimCity 2000.

You start Transport Tycoon in the year 1930 with a bag of borrowed dollars and a fistful of opportunities. You can build tracks, roads, and bridges; buy transport, depots, and stations; route and upgrade vehicles; raise and lower land masses; tunnel underground, and more.

The hitch? You're in a wild real-time race with one to six computer opponents who also want to create the richest transportation empire around. And you'll face disasters, vehicle crashes, and stubborn town councils that can veto building plans. You can also play one human opponent via (null-modem) cable, or you can opt for a testosterone-free game with no opponents at all.

Transport Tycoon designer Chris Sawyer says he wanted to take the best aspects of Sid Meier's Railroad Tycoon and make the game simpler and more appealing by shifting the emphasis from business management to construction. It's a challenge he's met, although some Railroad Tycoon aficionados may complain that Transport's artificial intelligence is too easy to beat and that the train modeling isn't as in-depth as Railroad Tycoon's.

But it's Transport Tycoon's astonishing attention to detail that makes this British import really shine. This is one game where graphics and sound aren't just chrome, but contribute mightily to the joy of game play. For example, look at the game world from afar with the minimum magnification level set. Then click on a train, and up pops a mini-window simultaneously showing you a close-up view of the pufferbelly as it journeys across the land.

The game's interface is equally well done, with almost all game functions easily and intuitively available by clicking on a row of 21 icons. The only quibble is that multiple windows can pile up on the screen and must be mouse-clicked away.

There are some other problems, too. Road vehicles have the annoying habit of getting lost or piling up in massive traffic jams. The skimpy manual is wholly inadequate. And in the game's later years, game play becomes less balanced with fewer options as players hit the 200-station or 640-vehicle limit.

Still, Transport Tycoon is nothing less than a first-class ticket to gaming pleasure.

TIPS

- **Plan for growth. If you can afford a multitrack train station, buy it. And remember that jet planes can't land safely at small 4-by-3 square airports. To reserve space for the larger 6-by-6 square airports, run roads over the unused squares.**
- **To play nasty, cut computer opponents' truck routes in half. Put track across a road and bulldoze the square.**
- **The manual is useless in explaining the train-signal system. Study how the computer opponents handle more than one train on a single track.**
- **The game has a limit of 200 stations and depots, but you can get around this by placing buildings next to each other, creating "combo" stations.**
- **Pause the game when it starts and analyze where best to set up your first route. Shipping iron ore, coal, or oil is usually profitable.**
- **In the game's first half, trains are the most profitable way to move passengers, but later on, planes are the big money-makers.**

Transport Tycoon
MicroProse
800-879-7529

Platform: DOS CD, DOS
Requires: 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0, Super VGA, mouse
List Price: $47.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★

Elegant design, addictive game play, and lavish attention to detail make Transport Tycoon a ride you won't want to miss.

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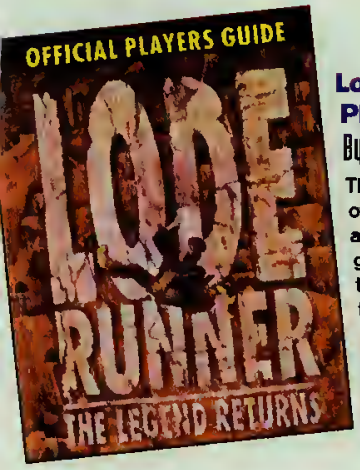
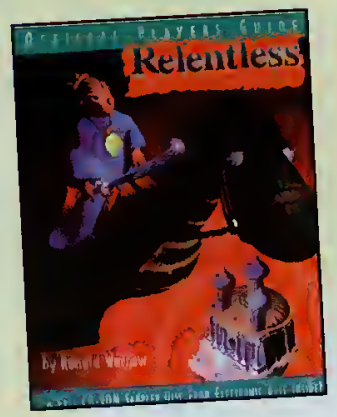


Lode Runner Official Players Guide
By Bernie Lee

This guide reveals secrets to the mazes of all 150 action-packed game levels and provides in-depth coverage of the game's all new features. Get helpful tips on building your own mazes with the Game Generator, plus using the Level Builder to create your own game!

Price: $18.95
BK-314
Platform: IBM Windows 3X or higher



Relentless: Twinsen's Adventure Official Players Guide
By Ronald Wartow

Take command of this exciting action-adventure game with this hot new players guide! Packed with strategies and images of key events and locations. Also includes a free CD-ROM game sampler from Electronic Arts!

Price: $19.95
BK-330
Platform: IBM-PC, Macintosh

Alien Legacy Official Players Guide
By John Sauer

Do you want the inside track on speeds, drive time, saving your ship, and using technology to your advantage? This is the ultimate companion for anyone trying to score big on this exciting game from Dynamix. Plus, all the clues, maps, tips and strategies you'll need to save the human race!

Price: $18.95
BK-308
Platform: IBM-PC, IBM-PC CD-ROM

Microsoft Golf version 2.0: The Authorized Guide
By Corey Sandler

This guide features hole-by-hole strategies for Firestone, Banff Springs, Torrey Pines, and Mauna Kea. Includes in-depth information on each course provided by golf experts. Book comes complete with a vacation guide to each of the courses and their surrounding areas!

Price: $18.95
BK-316
Platform: IBM Windows 3.X or higher

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DOS
DOS CD

The Lemmings Chronicles

The Lemmings are back, and it's up to you to keep them alive.

By Barry Brenesal

You thought they'd settled down for good, but no—it was too much to ask. Danger threatens, and the world is once more inundated with Lemmings.

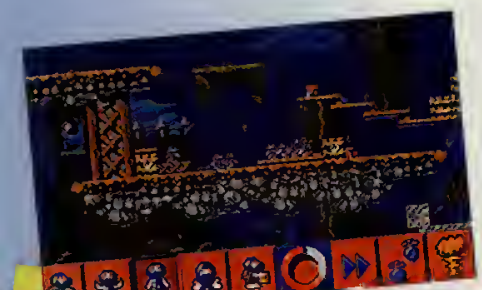
In the Lemmings Chronicles, three of the twelve tribes (Egyptian, Shadow Ninja, and Lemmings Classic) leave their trusty airships to settle three newly discovered islands. It's up to you to lead them successfully to new quarters.

If you've played any of the earlier, wildly popular Lemmings releases, you know that this is easier said than done. These cute but mindless little drones keep on the move, and they don't care whether it's over a bridge—or over a cliff.

Your job is to set things up so that they all (or as many as possible, anyway) can complete their journey to safety. You still direct your Lemmings' activities via a tool bar beneath the screen, but a number of new enhancements add to the fun.

The Lemmings Chronicles introduces a new feature: Lemmings are no longer restricted to one known ability each. Now they can use objects that they pick up such as life buoys (so they can swim across lakes) and umbrellas (so they can drop off high ledges safely).

As if The Lemmings Chronicles' natural obstacles weren't enough, for the first time, there are bad guys to confront as well. Anti-social Potato Beasts and Psycho Buzzards attack your Lemmings; more insidious is the Lemme Fatale, who attracts one Lemming at a time and drives it to suicidal desperation.



New obstacles and objects abound.

The new game features excellent detail in 256-color Super VGA, with slightly larger Lemmings than in earlier adventures, and the 90 new levels are considerably more colorful and varied. Each level has a time limit and a finite number of Lemmings—though "clock objects" that add seconds to the timer, as well as freed Lemming prisoners, may extend your visit.

Things are less peaceful than they first appear.

Beginners will appreciate the ability to practice Lemmings' skills before entering the fray for real. And pressing the R key lets you restart a failed level without penalty, so you don't have to go back and reload the current game just because a few too many of your dunderhead charges manage to off themselves. Finally, if you lose track of which Lemming has an important tool, just right-click in mid-air. Every one of the little suckers with a tool will be highlighted in turn, making it easier to locate the Lemming-du-Jour.

There's little difference between The Lemmings Chronicles on CD-ROM and the floppy version. If animation and digitized sound effects greatly enhance your experience, spend the extra money for the CD; otherwise, stick with the floppy. The music is pretty awful in either case.

The improved graphics, better controls, and more flexible skills add zest to this long-running series. But the addition of Lemming enemies may have been a mistake, diluting the unique flavor of the series, which had always focused exclusively on the little guys themselves. Still, puzzle fans with a taste for whimsy should have a great time with The Lemmings Chronicles.

TIPS

• Throw a brick at a Mole to get it to change digging directions. • After pausing the game, you can still scroll over an entire level—a good way to develop strategy. • If a Lemming is distracted by a Lemme Fatale, try distracting him.

The Lemmings Chronicles
Psygnosis
800-438-7794

Platform: DOS, DOS CD
Requires: 386SX/20, 4MB RAM, MS-DOS 3.3, VGA, Sound Blaster, mouse
List Price: DOS, $49; DOS CD, $59.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

Enhanced graphics and replayable levels make this the best Lemmings yet.

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

How to get surround sound without buying the theater...

Chase Technologies brings you an amazing new surround sound decoder that turns your stereo into a multi-channel home theater.

By Charles Anton

As much as I love renting videos, it's just not the same as seeing a movie in a theater. I remember the first time I saw *Jurrasic Park*. I nearly jumped out of my seat when the dinosaurs roared. One of the reasons movies seem so real is because surround sound makes it seem like you're actually there when events are happening. Now there's an incredible new device that lets you use a stereo receiver to get that same surround sound in your home.

It takes more than four speakers to get surround sound; there needs to be a way of separating the signals. The new Chase Technologies HTS-1 decoder does just that, and in a revolutionary way that rivals the best Dolby Pro-Logic and THX systems.

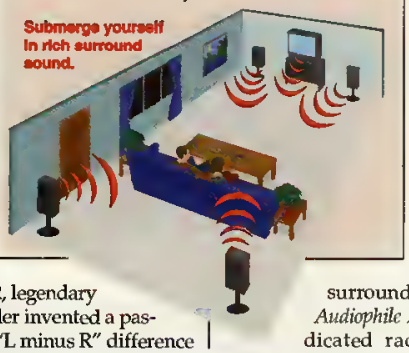
Wins over critics. Gary Reber, editor and publisher of the most authoritative magazine on home theater systems, *Widescreen Review*, stated, "...passive matrix decoders such as the new Chase HTS-1 work great as Dolby Surround™ extractors, and sound exceptionally natural when used for soundtracks and music."

Passive circuit. In 1972, legendary audio pioneer David Hafler invented a passive circuit to extract the "L minus R" difference signals in stereo soundtracks. Because the circuit was patented, it was only available on expensive Hafler products. Now that the patent has expired, Chase can make this amazing decoding system available at a fraction of the cost of other systems!

The secret of surround sound

Surround sound has become the rage of the 90's because it adds depth and realism to stereo sound, giving you the home theater experience. It makes you feel like you're actually at a concert or theater. To "fill a room" with surround sound, you need more than two channels. The HTS-1 provides four channels of sound from any two-channel stereo source

Free center channel. By connecting your VCR or laserdisc player to your TV, you get sound from your TV speaker; this acts as the fifth or "center channel." Adjusting your TV's volume gives you as much or as little "center channel" localization as you desire, without extra speakers or amps. There are also no extra costs with the "fifth" channel. When used with the HTS-1, you'll have a true state-of-the-art five-channel system.



Submerge yourself in rich surround sound.

Breakthrough. The HTS-1 is able to decode the Dolby Surround™ signal in a videotape or laserdisc because the spatial and depth cues have been matrixed into the "L minus R" portion of the two-channel stereo soundtrack. By decoding passively, the HTS-1 avoids costly and noisy signal processing. Plus you don't need any additional amps! Just connect the HTS-1 to your existing stereo system, add two speakers for the rear, and you'll experience the magic of home theater at a fraction of the cost.

Concert sound. The HTS-1 also decodes the ambience found in all music recordings. This sense of space, or "concert hall acoustics," is present in all CDs and cassettes, especially live recordings. John Sunier, the leading authority on surround sound and producer of *Audiophile Audition*, a nationally syndicated radio program for audio enthusiasts, says, "...the new Chase HTS-1, when used to decode the hidden ambience in all musical recordings, definitely outperforms all the Dolby and THX processors (which could cost you up to $3,000)... I am impressed!"

Easy installation. Hooking up the HTS-1 is easy. Simply connect the speaker outputs of your receiver or amp to the HTS-1, then connect speaker wire to the front and rear speakers. The rear channel speakers don't have to be big. In fact, we recommend the Chase ELF-1 in either black or white finish to match your decor. They can be mounted with enclosed color-matched mounting brackets or can be flush mounted on the wall. They are also water and weatherproof; they can be used indoors or out.

The ELF-1 rear chsnnel speakers integrate perfectly with the HTS-1.

Risk-free home trial. Let's face it— the best way to evaluate surround sound is in your home, not in a showroom. That's why we're offering this risk-free home trial. We're so sure you'll be delighted with the quality of these products and the surround sound experience that we are giving you 30 days to try them for yourself. If they're not everything we say, return them for a complete "No Questions Asked" refund.

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THE PASSIVE ADVANTAGE

Passive. *Chase Technologies' passive home theater system eliminates signal processing, yielding better clarity and detail. The effects sound amazingly real.*

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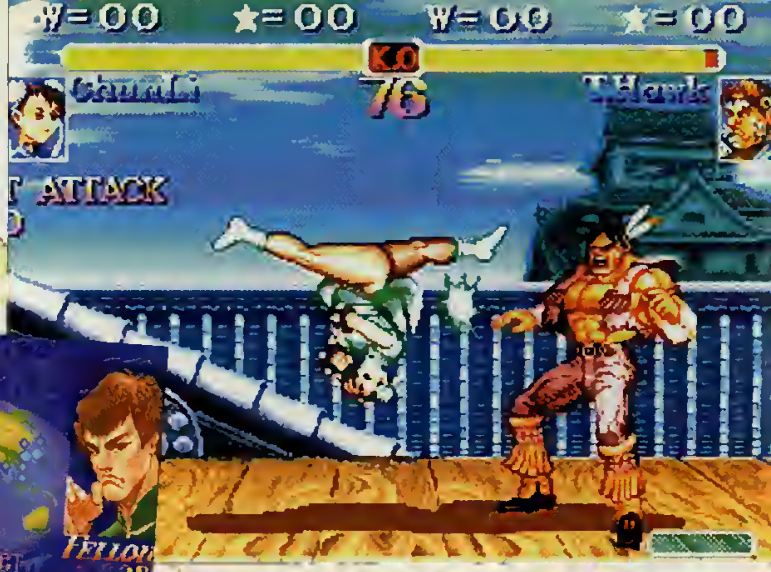
The HTS-1 decoder makes your movies come to life.

Super Street Fighter II Turbo

By Rick Raymo



ChunLi gets up to spin with her Whirlwind Kick.

Choose your fighter from one of the 16 Street Fighter II stars.

TIPS

● To play as Akuma, go to the character selection screen. Highlight Ryu's face for about five seconds, then quickly move to T. Hawk for about five seconds, Guile for five seconds, Cammy for five seconds, then back to Ryu for five seconds. Hit Start, and then immediately push all three Punch buttons simultaneously. ● To fight Akuma (this only works sometimes), choose your fighter, start a game against a computer opponent, and hit Start on a second controller. With controller two, choose the same opponent you were about to fight. Beat this opponent, then let the game revert to computer opposition. Repeat these steps with each character until you reach the final fight (normally against M. Bison). You may now get to battle Akuma. ● You can choose from six colors for your fighter by tapping one of the six Punch and Kick buttons. Get a seventh hidden color by holding down a button for several seconds.

Better late than never. 3DO has been searching madly for the killer game that will sell its set-top player, and that game has finally arrived in Super Street Fighter II Turbo from the Panasonic Software Company. If you're not yet sick of the smash-hit fighting phenomenon known as Street Fighter II (this is revision number 12), and you won't let little things like inadequate controllers get in your way, this is definitely the game for you.

Super Street Fighter II Turbo is the closest you can get to the real thing without going to the arcade. It has all 16 characters, the same backgrounds, the identical intro and ending cinematic scenes, the Super moves, the Special moves, the combos, and even the Q-Sound 3-D audio effects that the arcade gives you. Want to play as (or against) the hidden character Akuma? He's here, too.

Only a few of the arcade enhancements are missing on this disc version. Some of the movement in the backgrounds have gone AWOL. The ability to use a code to select the original Street Fighter II characters (as opposed to Super versions) is not available. The arcade music has also evaporated, replaced by an odd tweak of the original music that falls somewhere between annoying and unnatural. And the screen has developed an unpleasant flicker, noticeable mostly when you're looking at the status bars.

More importantly, the arcade game's controller is also missing. That's not to say the game's control itself is sloppy. The character control is as tight as ever; you just may not be able to get to it with a standard 3DO controller. The problem is, you're playing a six-button game with a five-button controller that uses the Pause button in the center to cover for the missing sixth button. Unfortunately, World Trade International's adapter, which lets you play 3DO games with a Super Nintendo controller, disables the Y-Button, reducing these units to five-button impotence too. Your best choice is a strangely shaped little six-button controller from Capcom ($29.95) that doubles-up the Pause button and puts one of them within reach. Adequate for most players, the thing is unfortunately small enough to cramp ham-fisted players.

Ignoring controller issues (if you can), Panasonic's 3DO version is by far the best adaptation of Super Street Fighter II for any home system, bar none. Even the CD-ROM access time is fairly good. The legions of major Street Fighter fans may want to buy this disc (and a 3DO machine if they don't already own one) for that reason alone.

Everyone's here—even the hidden character Akuma.

Super Street Fighter II Turbo
Panasonic Software Company
408-653-1898

Platform: 3DO
Requires: 3DO Multiplayer
List Price: $69.95

GAME PLAY:	★★★★★
GETTING STARTED:	★★★★
GRAPHICS:	★★★★
SOUND CHECK:	★★★
VALUE:	★★★★

This terrific translation of the arcade original is marred only by hardware-based control problems. You've been warned.

Novastorm

DOS CD
3DO
Sega CD

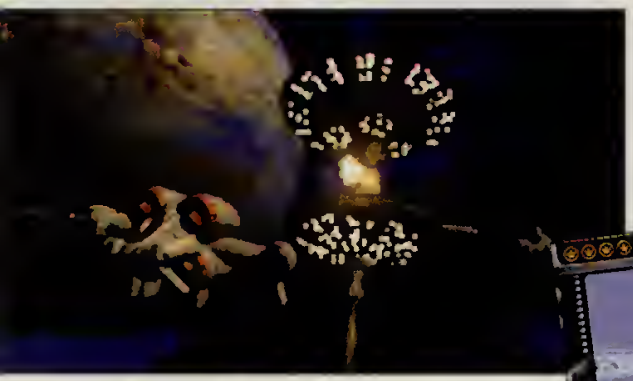
By Bernie Yee

Find Novastorm's power-ups, like tho double-shot lasor cannon, if you want to survivo.

Psygnosis, a company best known for its little green-haired Lemmings, leaps deep into the action market with Novastorm, a British import CD-ROM that makes your PC play like a 3DO machine.

Like any good full-testosterone shoot-'em-up, Novastorm delivers plenty of action and some dazzling effects set against beautiful computer-rendered backdrops. The result? A no-brainer reflex-fest that can blast away toe-to-toe with any console offering.

The storyline is up-to-the minute cyberpunk chic, but it has little to do with the game itself: In 2129, humanity faces the threat of a near-omniscient computer network. Humankind's last hope is to launch a Scavenger 4 fighter to attack the computer's data centers and—eventually—the big CPU himself. The plot is advanced from time to time by full-motion video sequences of actors and rendered spacecraft.



The high-res cut scenes are pleasing to the eye but meaningless to the joystick.

Novastorm's six different worlds, including this ice world, will keep arcade fanatics busy.

But don't let the existence of a plot confuse you. The real object of the game is to kill or be killed as you fly through six different worlds attacking a variety of enemy spacecraft. You won't find sophisticated enemy artificial intelligence here, just waves of hostiles designed to wear down your ship's shields.

As your spacecraft whizzes by exquisite planetscapes, Novastorm gives you more control than did first-generation CD-ROM combat games like Rebel Assault and Novastorm's predecessor, Microcosm. However, the game's viewpoint is set behind the Scavenger 4 fighter, so you don't get an in-the-cockpit experience a la Wing Commander III.

Your Scavenger 4 can pick up "currency" bonuses from destroyed enemies en route that you can cash in for more effective weapons. These power-ups can give you double or triple shots, homing missiles, or additional smart bombs. And in the formula made famous by dozens of cartridge-based video games, your little fighter must face a tough "big boss" at the end of each level.

In fact, Novastorm behaves like a cartridge or arcade game in lots of ways, and versions are available for 3DO and Sega CD as well as for DOS CD-ROM. The game takes up almost no space on your PC's hard drive, stopping only to leave its configuration file and a list of high scores. Flight is smooth and the graphics are excellent, although the cut scenes are a bit murky. The CD-ROM delivers excellent voice and sound effects.

The game's emphasis on action means that while strategy and three-dimensional thinking may help X-Wing pilots, you'd best leave that heavy stuff at home when you load Novastorm. Arcade-quick reflexes are the top priority for success here. Coin-op aficionados will find action that lives up to their highest expectations, but more sophisticated space-combat players may be disappointed.

TIPS

- Make it your first priority to pick up medallions and get the power-ups to triple-shot power.
- Additional power-ups increase shot and smart-bomb power.
- Homing missiles come in handy. Try to collect a few so you'll retain some when you lose a ship.
- Blue orbiters are powerful, but you should get the remotes instead. They fire independently and make the tough third guardian much easier.
- All guardians have a movement pattern, so watch carefully. For example, the first boss fires two spiked balls to the lower right corner, then one to the upper left.
- Anything that glows red is a weak spot—hit it! The second guardian's weakness is inside the satellite dish. Shoot the third guardian in the mouth.

Novastorm
Psygnosis
800-438-7794

Platform: DOS CD, 3DO, Sega CD
Requires: 386DX/33, 4MB RAM, VGA, DOS 5.0, VGA
List Price: $59.99

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ½

Novastorm is an arcade-style space shooter dressed up with impressive rendered backdrops. Action game fans will find themselves right at home in this cockpit.

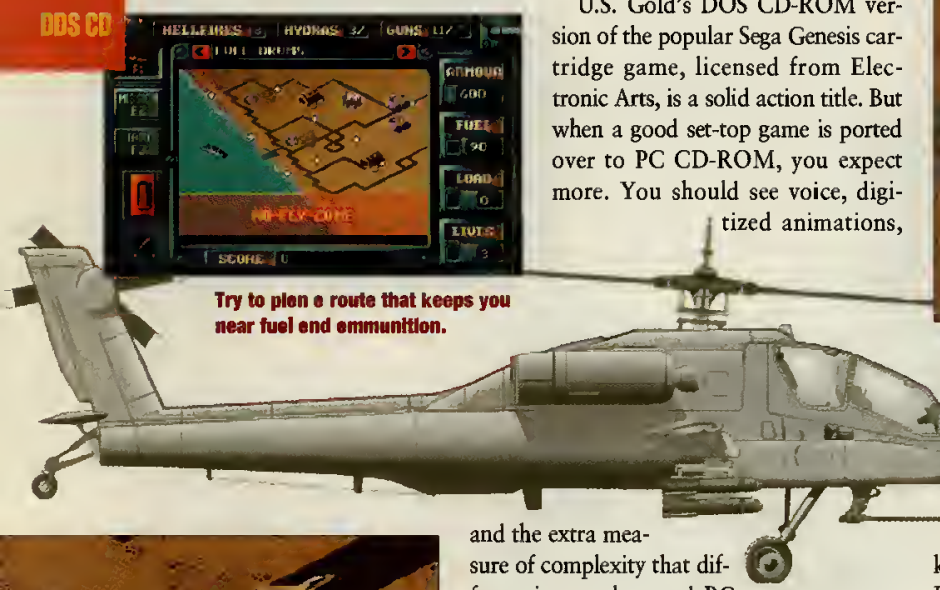
Desert Strike: Return to the Gulf

By John Sauer

DOS CD

Ever get the urge to take a heat-seeking missile and deliver it first class to a Middle Eastern madman? Desert Strike: Return to the Gulf gives PC warriors the opportunity to live their dreams behind the controls of an Apache helicopter.

U.S. Gold's DOS CD-ROM version of the popular Sega Genesis cartridge game, licensed from Electronic Arts, is a solid action title. But when a good set-top game is ported over to PC CD-ROM, you expect more. You should see voice, digitized animations, and the extra measure of complexity that differentiates advanced PC titles from kiddie cartridge fodder. With Desert Strike, what you get instead is a game that's true to the Genesis version, just bigger and much more difficult to play.



Try to plan a route that keeps you near fuel and ammunition.

Find a safe spot and use the cannon to take radar dishes out. That will shorten the range of enemy weapons.

The airfield is guarded by Bruiser missiles. Use Hellfire missiles on them, and the cannon on the jets.

You play as the hotshot pilot of an Apache attack helicopter who's been called to the Gulf to put a preemptive kibosh on General Kilbaba before he can unleash a horde of chemical and nuclear weapons. Along the way, you rescue MIA copilots and blast just about everything that appears on the screen. Desert Strike is sizable, with four different campaigns featuring more than 30 different missions. Your chopper is armed with two types of missiles and a cannon, and you have a number of copilots to choose from, each with slightly different talents for running the winch and shooting things. Also, you get more copilot choices as you rescue them in each campaign.

The main objective of each mission is to destroy a series of enemy targets and rescue the MIAs, while finding enough fuel, armor, and ammo to keep you going. The function keys control radar screens that identify the locations of such things as enemies, gas, and the goals of each mission.

You can control flight and weapons with just the keyboard, or with a joypad and keyboard. But control is Desert Strike's greatest fault. On the Genesis version, you run everything from the joypad; here, you can shoot and control direction with a joypad. But you must hit the space bar to change weapons and use the function keys for your radar, enemy identification, and other critical tasks. Spreading the controls between joypad and keyboard makes for awkward game play. And playing this type of game by keyboard alone is a good argument for ergonomic research.

Overall, the difficulty and graphics will keep set-top-trained gamers happy, but fans of Doom and other high-tech games on the PC will find this one a little stale.

Desert Strike: Return to the Gulf
U.S. Gold
415-693-0293

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 386, DOS 5.0, 640KB RAM, VGA, sound card
Street Price: $34.95

GAME PLAY:	★★
GETTING STARTED:	★★
GRAPHICS:	★★
SOUND CHECK:	★★★
VALUE:	★★

Desert Strike is a good game that loses points for using CD-ROM as merely a big floppy disk instead of packing in some extra goodies.

TIPS

- To increase your shooting accuracy, hold down the Ctrl key and press the Left/Right keys while firing.
- Pick the best all-around winching and shooting copilot to start.
- Taking the objectives in each campaign out of order usually gets you shot down.
- Don't stop to take out non-objective targets unless you need fuel, ammo, or armor.

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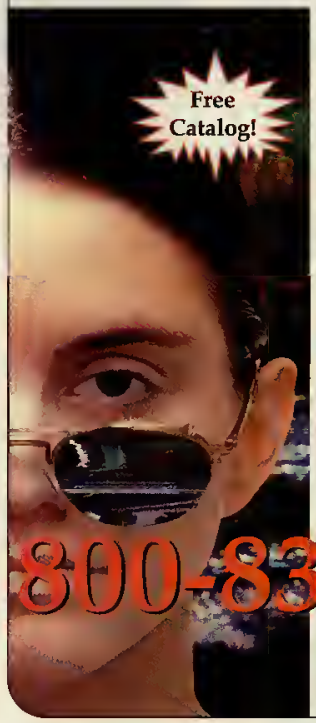

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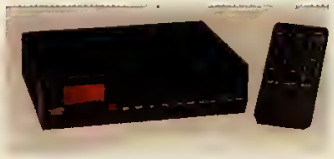

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Blake Stone: Planet Strike

By Joel Enos

Help! I'm stuck somewhere in the Transport arrival area and can't seem to find my way back to the Security Cube. That may seem inconsequential to you, but if you're playing Blake Stone: Planet Strike, it's critical.

Planet Strike adds 20 new action-packed levels to the Blake Stone saga that began with Aliens of Gold. As Blake, a British military agent, you maneuver your way around the abandoned Star Institute Training Complex, a funky, maze-like facility on the distant planet Selon. Dr. Goldfire has created another army of more than 20 different mutants—some green and slimy, others spider-like, and all extremely angry. The toughest of these diabolical creations can even morph into other mutants or be regenerated by any available electric power. You must get to Goldfire and put him permanently out of the picture before his Acid Dragons destroy the universe.

So that's what he's filled with!

Some critters become fully visible only after you kill 'em.

Fans of Doom should dig this game, too: It's a bit repetitious but adds some refreshing twists to the old corridor journey. To escape each level, you need to find a detonator and blow up the security cube guarding the transporters to other sectors of the Star facility. Of course, you get to kill numerous creepy space things along the way.

Stashed around the Institute are such point enhancers as treasure chests, gold bars, and the occasional big bag of money emblazoned with a good old-fashioned dollar sign. Health, always a major factor in these kinds of first-person shoot-'em-ups, can be replenished at the Food Units located in the halls. But this time, food isn't free: You have to pay for it with coins that you steal from dead mutants or find lying around. If you're broke and desperate, you can always chomp on some of the raw meat on the floor. (Mmm! Mmm!) The occasional Medi-Pack can also help fix up failing health.

You can't shoot the cube; you must blow it up.

An automap traces where you've been and points out doors—green means open, red signifies locked. Informants disguised as enemy scientists give you clues, food tokens, and energy packs whenever questioned. Just make sure you get a good reaction on first interrogation—an irritated scientist is likely to open fire if you bug him twice.

On the downside, Doom aficionados won't be impressed with the graphics; the images simply aren't as appealing as Id's finest. Nevertheless, the addictiveness factor for this addition to the list of Doom Killers is quite high. And its 4 difficulty levels, 20 game levels, 6 guns—including an anti-plasma cannon that can blow doors out of your way—and oodles of bonus goodies will keep you glued to Planet Strike long after your eyes have turned red and your fingers have begun to ache.

TIPS

- If an informant responds rudely or hesitantly, blast him. Not all scientists are your friends, and some have guns.
- Switch to one of the first three guns for shooting ceiling turrets. The high-powered ones won't do the trick.
- Cloaked enemies are hard to see in the shadowed areas; look carefully instead of shooting around aimlessly.

CHEATS

Type JAM and press Enter at any point during the game to get full ammo and health, all the weapons, and all the access cards for that level. Unfortunately, you lose all your points when you do this.

Blake Stone: Planet Strike
Apogee
800-276-4331

Platform: DOS
Requires: 386, 640KB RAM, VGA, sound card
Street Price: $29.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

A worthy successor to Wolfenstein-3D and Doom, Planet Strike is dangerously hard to stop playing.

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DOS CD

Front Page Sports Football Pro '95

By Vox Day

All he does is catch touchdowns!

"Siddown, Brett!"

Design your own plays in the play editor.

TIPS

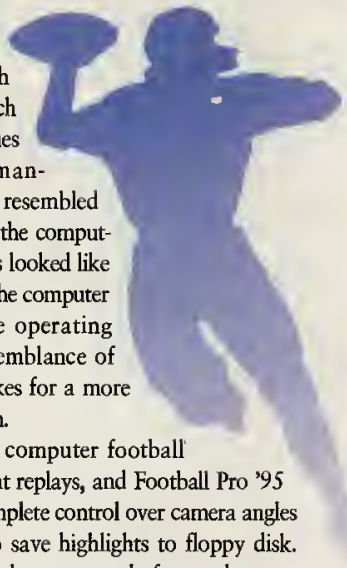
• When drafting, focus on your skill players. Interceptions kill you faster than anything, so seek QB s with good Strength and high Discipline, then running backs and receivers with good Speed and Hands. • If you have two good running backs, don't play them together; demote one to HB2, then copy your best running plays into your playbook and substitute HB2 for HB1. When HB1 tires in the middle of a drive, bring in your fresh HB2 to hammer the ball through.

Football Pro '94 blew away the opposition in last year's computer-football game market. It offered an unbeatable combination of good game play, excellent team-management abilities, nice graphics, and reasonable artificial intelligence for the computer opponents.

Football Pro '94's successor, Front Page Sports Football Pro '95, extends the lead, adding much more than just new player statistics. Dynamix has updated the rules to match the 1994 NFL season, moving kickoffs to the 30-yard line and allowing 2-point conversions. The coaching profiles have been updated, too; this is important because, as any football fan knows, the 2-point conversion has a serious effect on coaching strategy. (Do you go for the almost-guaranteed tie, or try for the not-so-sure win?) And Dynamix finally landed a license for the official NFL team names, so you can crush the Packers with the Vikings, not the Varangians.

As always, Football Pro has three different action modes, from the basic setting, which is essentially a coaching mode, to advanced, which resembles a Sega-style video game. You also get three Playcall modes: Beginners can choose from short lists of plays such as "Run right" or "Pass short," more advanced players can look at diagrams to choose their plays, and anyone willing to memorize the playbook can simply choose from a list of play numbers. The new version even lets you switch among the Playcall modes at any point in the game, a nice feature if you forget the meaning of play "11-2" at a critical moment.

The game also improves the artificial intelligence for team management. One weakness of Football Pro '94 was the computer's unfortunate willingness to trade you a starter in return for your third-string punter. Only a saint or a fool could resist such temptations, which often led to leagues where the human-managed squads resembled the 'Niners while the computer-controlled clubs looked like the 'Skins. Now, the computer GMs seem to be operating with at least a semblance of sanity, which makes for a more competitive season.



Most modern computer football games offer instant replays, and Football Pro '95 keeps up with complete control over camera angles and the ability to save highlights to floppy disk. Also, the unlimited-camera-angle feature lets you see the whole game from any angle. You can even program eight customized views, then instantly change the view at any time.

Like Football Pro '94, league play against other human-managed teams is still the best part of Football Pro '95. You manage your team, build your plays, edit the coaching profiles, then throw your guys onto the field to face the opposition. (You only get to watch; you can't control play.) If your opponents are as unscrupulous as mine, you'd better hide your playbook, or you may run into some suspiciously familiar defensive sets. And you don't want a little thing like that standing between you and the Super Bowl.

Front Page Sports Football Pro '95
Dynamix
800-757-7707

Platform: DOS, DOS CD
Requires: 386/33, 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0
List Price: DOS, $54.95; DOS upgrade, $29.95; DOS CD, $59.95

GAME PLAY:	★★★★★
GETTING STARTED:	★★★
GRAPHICS:	★★★★
SOUND CHECK:	★★★★★
VALUE:	★★★★★

Front Page Sports Football Pro '95 dominates the line of scrimmage. If you're looking for a computer-football game, this is the MVP.

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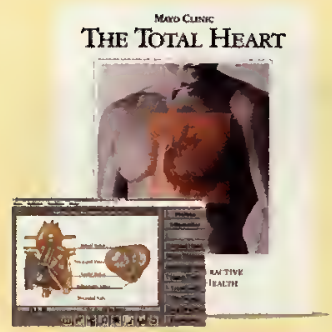

How do the heart's valves work?

What's the best fitness program for me?

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Corpse Killer

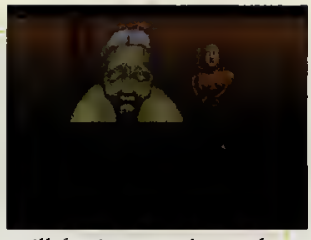
Digital Pictures' Corpse Killer seems to have a lot going for it. It's 100% video. It's filled with live actors, including the recognizable character actor Vincent Schiavelli as the evil Dr. Hellman, a madman who commands an army of rotting corpses. It was shot on location in the exotic Caribbean. It even has good music. But under the skin, it's just another shooter in the tradition of Mad Dog McCree. Worse, Hellman's zombie groupies look like blurry blobs, and the game relies on a tired PDA metaphor. (Digital Pictures; 800-262-5020)

—*BM*

Platform: Mac CD, Sega CD, 3DO
Requires: Macintosh LC III, System 7, 3.5MB RAM, double-speed CD-ROM drive, 256-color graphics
Street Price: $60

GAME PLAY: ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★

Cosmology of Kyoto



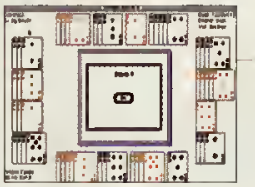
The exquisite and excruciating Cosmology of Kyoto, Tales of the Heian Millennium will fascinate students of ancient Japan. Beautiful graphics of the 10th century capital city, eerie period music, enigmatic characters, and accurate maps bring Japan's classical period to realistic life as you work through the six realms of Existence in search of Paradise. There's even a reference mode for more information. But be warned: Glacial game play and awkward translations from the Japanese will frustrate gamers accustomed to more traditional adventure games. (Azuma Lander International; 415-928-7914)

—*FP*

Platform: Mac CD
Requires: 68030, 4MB RAM, System 6.0.7, QuickTime 1.5, 256-color graphics, 13-inch monitor
Street Price: $65-$79

GAME PLAY: ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★

Bridge Baron



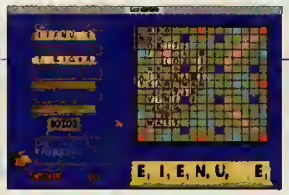
Multimedia it's not, but Alfred Sheinwold Presents Bridge Baron for Macintosh bids and plays a slick little game of bridge. Perfect for PowerBooks, this one-diskette program knows all the popular conventions, deals two million different hands, and gives you the option of who gets the best cards and how well the computer plays. It handles contract or duplicate games, tracks your scores, and even challenges you with 24 special "problem deals" concocted by bridge expert Sheinwold. (Great Game Products; 800-334-6572)

—*FP*

Platform: Mac
Requires: System 6.0.5, 1MB RAM
List Price: $59.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: N/A
VALUE: ★ ★ ★

The Computer Edition Scrabble



MacPlay's Scrabble looks and plays much like the original board game, but pits you against either the computer or as many as two human opponents. You can choose from nine levels of difficulty, but if you start to lose, it's easy to cheat. Want "xflisd" to be a word? Just tell Scrabble to accept it. You can even change sides with the computer if you fall too far behind. (MacPlay, 800-462-2752)

—*CP*

Platform: Mac
Requires: 1500K RAM, System 6.0.7, black-and-white graphics
List Price: $29.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★

Reader's Digest Multimedia Crosswords

Crossword puzzles get the multimedia treatment in *Reader's Digest* Multimedia Crosswords. This Windows game provides 30 easy-to-moderately-tough puzzles, with topics ranging from By the Book to Famous Faces. The game's audio and video clues don't always match the text clue and can be slow loading. It's not necessarily an improvement on the old pencil-and-newspaper method, but it lets you cheat by filling in a missing letter or word when you're stumped. (InterMedia Interactive Software; 215-387-0448)

—*CG*

Platform: Win CD
Requires: 386SX/16, 4MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, Windows 3.1, Super VGA, sound card
List Price: $34.95

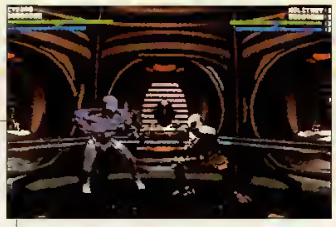
GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★
VALUE: ★ ★

Flash Traffic

Think of Flash Traffic as a made-for-TV movie with an interactive element. The healthy dose of video, storyline, script, and acting adequately imitate your average televised tale about nuke-building terrorists. This isn't necessarily bad; a lot of games in the "interactive movie" mold wouldn't even make it on a bad cable channel. But this title, like many in the genre, lacks game play. This whole interactive flick will last about as long as an average film—a couple hours. And while the graphics are good, the game simply won't satisfy a hunger for long-lasting action. (Time Warner Interactive; 800-482-3766) —*BM*

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 386DX/33, 4MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, VGA, double-speed CD-ROM drive, sound card, mouse
List Price: $39.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★



Rise of the Robots

Connoisseurs of 3-D computer animation should check out Rise of the Robots from Time Warner Interactive. Fashioned after arcade-style combat games, Rise pits your cyborg against a variety of virus-infected automatons under the control of the twisted, morphing Supervisor. Fans of Mortal Kombat-like arcade games will find the keyboard controls slow, and you can't play as any of the other robots. But the beautiful graphics and fluid motion help paper over the flaws. (Time Warner Interactive; 800-482-3766) —*JE*

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/33, 4MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, VGA, Sound Blaster
List Price: $49.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

Cyclemania

Cyclemania isn't a superb motorcycle simulation, but it's not bad. Once you get the hang of braking and accelerating on the game's five video-based tracks, it can be reasonably exciting. The tracks feature the standard hair-raising descents and turns, annoying autos, and pesky cops. After each crash, you're treated to video of a professional rider biting the dust—sort of like driver's ed. A variety of courses and the chance to upgrade your bike will keep you on the circuit for a while, but don't be surprised if you retire early. (Accolade; 800-245-7744) —*BM*

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 386DX/33, 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0, double-speed CD-ROM drive, Super VGA, Sound Blaster
List Price: $59.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★

National Lampoon's Blind Date

Trimark Interactive and *National Lampoon* chose the right title to spoof when they aimed this satirical jab at Tsunami Media's Man Enough—a lackluster "social adventure" in which you deliver inane pickup lines to various female conquests. But *National Lampoon's* Blind Date is no more redeeming. It's got a few funny—if juvenile—lines and plenty of cleavage, but in the end you'll probably be embarrassed that you spent the time and money on this date. (Trimark Interactive; 310-314-3046) —*BM*

Platform: Win/Mac CD
Requires: 486/25, 8MB RAM, Windows 3.1, VGA, Sound Blaster
List Price: $49.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★

Risk Deluxe

MacPlay upgrades the computer version of Risk—the classic military-strategy board game—with more colors, sound effects, and statistics. The game's new interface can cause problems, though, as dialog boxes cover the board and can't be shut off easily. If you don't memorize the board layout, it's easy to lose track of how many armies you should leave at home and how many you should use for the next offensive. And one wrong move could be your last. (MacPlay; 800-462-2752) —*BM*

Platform: Mac
Requires: 2MB RAM, System 6.0.7, black-and-white graphics
List Price: $29.95

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★

TECH SHOP

By James Daly

Digital Photofest

Why is it that snapping photographs can be so much fun, but once you've popped the shutter, the rest of the picture-gathering process so quickly evolves into a royal pain? Developing film is expensive, your photos aren't ready when they're supposed to be, or your color film has been printed in black-and-white (true story).

Digital cameras do away with these annoying hassles and take you right to the good stuff. Click the shutter, and you can immediately download the snapshot into your personal computer and get an eyeful. And if you don't like what you see, you can manipulate the digital images to turn a throwaway into a keeper. But there's a catch: Even the cheapest digital cameras cost more than all but the most expensive 35mm cameras. The picture quality on lower-end digital photo boxes won't blow you away, either. As a result, the most compelling arguments for digital cameras aren't centered around price or image quality, but gotta-get-it-now deadlines and technology fetishes. (For a look at how digital-camera technology works, see "You Oughta Be in Pixels," February 1994, page 104.)

Logitech FotoMan Plus

To help you get the picture, we tracked down six color and grayscale models ranging in price from $399 to $10,995.

Apple QuickTake 100

Apple supposedly created the one-pound QuickTake 100 to let designers easily integrate color photos into documents or multimedia presentations, but this digital camera is also an excellent source of instant photographic gratification—sort of a modern-day Polaroid. The QuickTake stores any combination of up to 32 standard-resolution (320-by-240 pixels) or 8 high-resolution (640-by-480 pixels) images on an internal 1MB memory chip. You can keep the pictures stored in memory for as long as a year or until you decide to erase or download them.

Apple QuickTake 100

The QuickTake's picture quality is surprisingly good—especially at high resolution—and is roughly comparable to an image shot by a camcorder. The QuickTake 100 comes equipped with a nonremovable 50mm lens and a built-in flash, and it earns extra points for using standard AA batteries, although it comes with NiCad batteries. You can immediately download its 24-bit images to a Mac or Windows-based computer via a serial cable connected to a printer or modem port. Once the photographs are in the machine, you can crop, manipulate, or print the images using standard image-editing software. (Apple Computer; 800-538-9696; PC/Mac, $749)

Logitech FotoMan Plus

The FotoMan Plus updates Logitech's popular 256-grayscale digital camera, the FotoMan. The FotoMan Plus's battery life is 100 hours, compared to 36 hours in its predecessor, and Logitech has upgraded the primary lens from 55mm to 65mm—roughly equivalent to a standard single-lens-reflex camera lens. A self-regulating flash control lets you shoot from a distance of 3 feet to 6 feet using a standard lens.

The FotoMan's 496-by-360-pixel resolution and 256 levels of gray make for adequate pictures, if not quite up to QuickTake standards. The FotoMan Plus also sports a snappy vertical design, which makes it look like more like a modernist channel changer than a camera. Transfer photos from the FotoMan to your PC using a serial cable connected to a printer or modem port. To reduce storage requirements so it can store as many as 32 photos, the FotoMan compresses an image as soon as you take it, and the compression process ties up the camera for about 10 seconds before you can shoot again.

Logitech also throws in a carrying case to keep the camera dent-free, as well as its FotoTouch software, which lets you retouch, add color, lighten, resize, and rotate your images. (Logitech; 800-231-7717; PC; $399)

Dycam Model 3 Digital Gray Scale Camera, Dycam 4XL

The slender, vertical Dycam digital cameras look a lot like FotoMan clones. Four Dycam models are available, ranging from the Model 3 Digital Gray Scale Camera (capable of taking 8-bit black-and-white images at 496-by-365-pixel resolution) to the high-end 4XL (which takes 24-bit color images at 496-by-365-pixel resolution).

Each camera offers a built-in flash. If the Dycam's standard 8.5mm (on the Model 3XL) or 11mm lenses (all others) don't suit you, you can also buy six different lenses with various focal lengths that can be fastened onto the body through the use of a lens adapter.

Each camera differs when it comes to photo storage. The Model 3 Digital Gray Scale Camera can hold a maximum of eight images when shooting for the highest quality, while the Model 4XL is able to pack in an astounding 100 images. Each camera weighs just 10 ounces, which makes them easy to slip into a pocket or purse.

Once you transfer images to a computer via serial cable, you can catalogue, locate, and view them using the ImagePals image-editing software, which comes bundled with each camera. Dycam also throws in a serial cable, battery recharger, and a desk stand for the camera. (Dycam; 800-883-9226; PC/Mac; Model 3 Digital Gray Scale Camera, $695; 4XL, $995)

Dycam Model 3

Fujix DS-100

For the cost of a high-end PC, you can pick up Fuji's Fujix DS-100. Your investment buys you some nice extras. For instance, the DS-100 color camera provides through-the-lens image viewing—you see exactly what the camera will record. Less expensive digital cameras use a separate viewfinder, which means that at close shooting distances, you may accidentally chop off a head or some feet.

The DS-100 also includes a video-out jack so you can connect the camera to a VCR, TV monitor, or any computer equipped with video-input hardware. Another thoughtful feature lets you delete individual images to free up memory for new ones (the other digital cameras force you to delete or download all the images at once). The camera has a maximum resolution of 640-by-480 pixels, and it can hold between 5 and 21 photographs, depending upon what image quality you choose.

Fujix DS-100

One downside of the Fujix DS-100 is that it uses proprietary rechargeable batteries, so be sure to take some extras along for extended photo shoots. The camera certainly isn't inexpensive, either, especially when you consider that you need the $2,000 DP-100 Memory Card Processor to transfer images to your computer via serial cable. (Fuji Photo Film; 800-755-3854; PC/Mac, $3,200)

Kodak Professional DCS 420

Got a big bundle you're prepared to blow on a digital camera? Then the Kodak Professional DCS 420 is your toy. The DCS 420 is the Ferrari of the digital camera world—slick, black, and sporting a whopping $10,995 price tag. It consists of a special electronic back fixed to the body of a standard Nikon N90 camera, providing the feel and lens-switching capabilities of a traditional film camera but using 36-bit color and digital storage to capture images with an impressive 1524-by-1012-pixel resolution. It's also very quick—it can shoot a five-image burst in 2.25 seconds. Compared with the FotoMan, with which you have to wait 10 seconds between shots, this baby really cooks.

This photojournalist's dream supports a variety of hard-disk and flash-memory cards, depending on how many images you want to store at once. It's powered by a rechargeable nickel-hydride battery pack that is estimated to give at least 1,000 exposures per charge. The DCS 420 even includes a built-in microphone that can record notes about a shot and a SCSI cable to connect directly to a Mac or PC. Three models are available: the 420C (color), 420M (black and white), and the 420IR (infrared). (Eastman Kodak; 800-242-2424; PC/Mac, $10,995)

Kodak Professional DCS 420

TECH SHOP

By Christopher Lindquist

3-D for the PC

Arcade addicts have long scoffed at the PC as a game machine. Specialized arcade hardware completely outclasses general-purpose PCs for sheer pulse-pounding graphics and action. But now Virtua Fighter, Primal Rage, and the rest of the arcade kingpins are in for some serious competition: Real-time 3-D graphics are here for your PC.

Well, not exactly right now, but they are coming in low and fast over the horizon. New hardware, better software, and operating-system enhancements are sending true 3-D straight into the PC mainstream. You ain't seen nothing like it on a PC.

Sure, 3-D games—ones that launch you into a virtual "space" that appears to have length, width, and depth—have been available on the PC since the early days of Microsoft Flight Simulator. But even today's top examples—Doom II, Wing Commander III, and TIE Fighter—merely hint at what you'll see soon. New games from Virgin Interactive Entertainment, Looking Glass Technologies, Mindscape, and others will take full advantage of advanced 3-D hardware. When they arrive, your PC will show you fluid, fast action and detail beyond anything currently available.

Imagine walking up to a wall in Doom II: Instead of watching it dissolve into a blocky mess as you get closer, it'll stay sharp and crisp. And instead of squinting at pixelated planes in your favorite flight sim, you'll see all of the craft's detail, right down to the rivets.

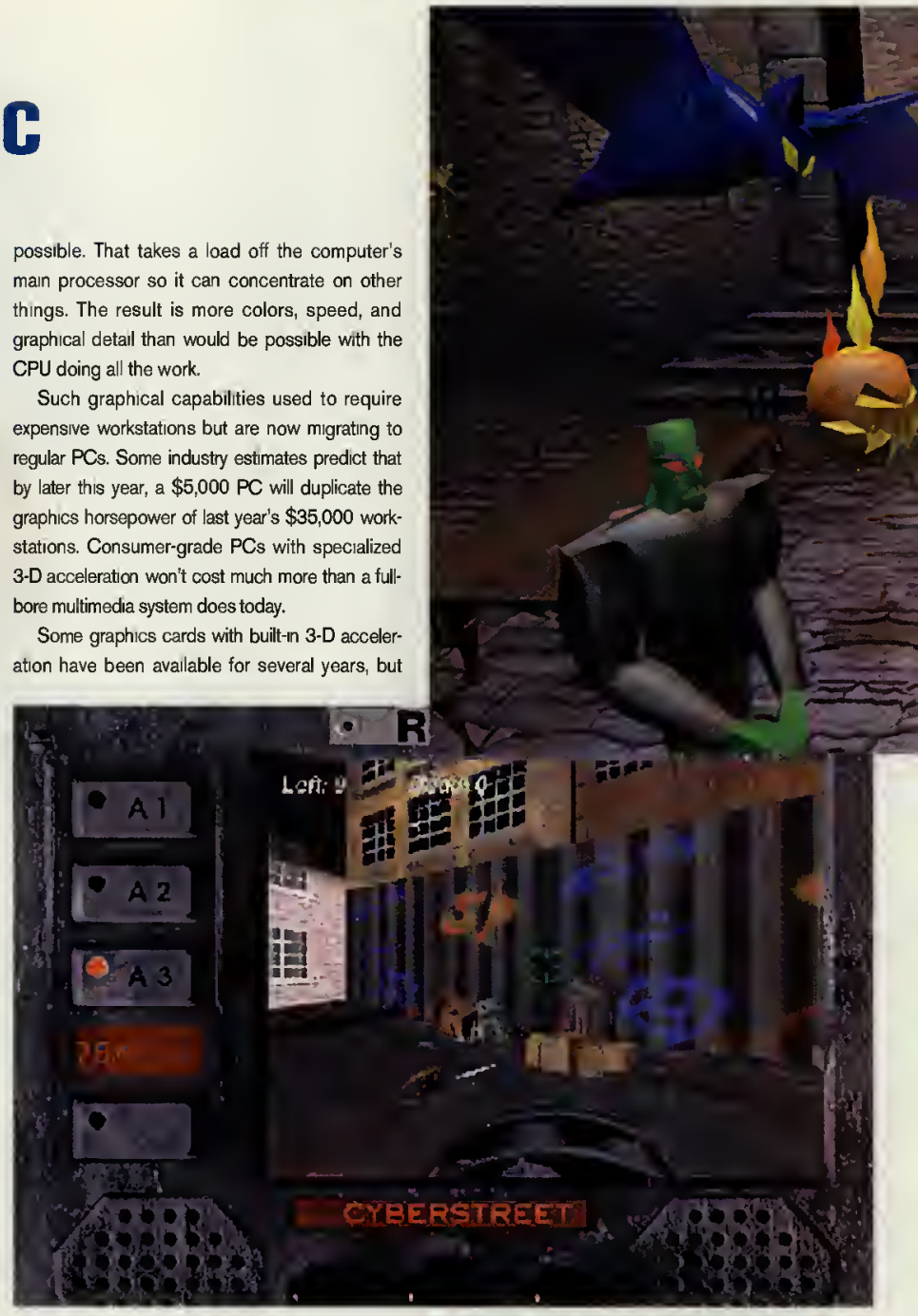
Hardware Horsepower

Faster CPUs such as the Intel Pentium, paired with special 3-D accelerator chips from S3, 3D Labs, Cirrus Logic, and other hardware manufacturers, are about to turn the PC into a hardware platform rivaling anything you can find in the arcades for pixel-pushing power.

Graphics cards employing these accelerator chips function much as Windows accelerator cards do today: The graphics chip does nothing but send specific types of "primitives" (graphics information such as the polygons often used to create 3-D objects) to the screen as quickly as possible. That takes a load off the computer's main processor so it can concentrate on other things. The result is more colors, speed, and graphical detail than would be possible with the CPU doing all the work.

Such graphical capabilities used to require expensive workstations but are now migrating to regular PCs. Some industry estimates predict that by later this year, a $5,000 PC will duplicate the graphics horsepower of last year's $35,000 workstations. Consumer-grade PCs with specialized 3-D acceleration won't cost much more than a full-bore multimedia system does today.

Some graphics cards with built-in 3-D acceleration have been available for several years, but they tended to be hyper-expensive professional tools for engineers and architects. Last year, Matrox introduced its MGA Impression Plus card with 3-D acceleration, which listed for less than $500. That card does some cool things, but lacked such key features as support for texture maps, which lets game developers put a realistic face on blocky polygons. The next crop of cards, which is due mid-year, promises to be more impressive—and less expensive. Also, all of the likely suspects, from Creative Labs to Diamond Multimedia, have 3-D cards in the works.



Renderware's Cyberstreet looks good now, but it could be improved even more with 3-D acceleration.

Of course, producing photo-realistic 3-D images can still take days—even on $100,000 workstations. As a result, games can't actually use those ultra high-res objects for anything other than non-interac-

47-Tek's Creep Clash takes PC fighting games to a new level.

Yep, he's just as tough as he looks.

tive animated introductions and cut scenes. Actual game play is made up of scaled-down versions of these high-res originals; developers reduce the original object to a shallow, pixelated shadow of its former self. This makes it easier for the computer to manipulate multiple frames of the image quickly, instead of running jerky and slow. And that means players can work with the image directly, in real time, as they play. New 3-D hardware and software will enable developers to create games that use objects that are much closer to the original super-high-resolution versions than they do now.

Software Tools

Hardware is only part of the story. An increasing selection of 3-D development tools—not to mention game-enhancing improvements in Microsoft's Windows 95—is also working to ease the way to 3-D action.

RenderMorphics, Criterion, Argonaut—even their names sound high-tech. These companies lead the field in producing 3-D graphics libraries. Game developers can use these tools to turn their high-res 3-D images (see "Software Behind the Scenes," November 1994, page 64) into objects that can be manipulated in real time. The developer creates the high-res world and then uses a graphics library to put it in a format that can be drawn on a computer screen, or rendered as quickly as possible.

Some game developers have relied on internally developed libraries, instead of commercial products, in their quest for maximum performance. But commercial graphics-library companies enable others without these resources to produce 3-D games. And 3-D–library vendors are also working with 3-D hardware makers to ensure that games created with their libraries can take full advantage of the new chips.

Windows 95 should also speed the development of 3-D games. Microsoft is bent on removing the game-crippling overhead in Windows 3.1, and Bill Gates' crew swears that Windows 95 will be a suitable platform for high-performance gaming. To prove its point, Microsoft is providing developers with a set of tools for game development, code-named Manhattan.

Apart from the Manhattan project, Microsoft's 3-D Device Driver Interface, or 3DDDI, will give hardware and software vendors a common frame on which to build their 3-D accelerators and games. Using 3DDDI will let developers build 3-D games for Windows 95 that will be able to use any available acceleration hardware. This should help developers who don't want to spend a lot of time and money making sure their software works with every graphics card on the market. That, in turn, should encourage game makers who once considered 3-D to be too expensive and too much trouble to develop for it.

Just don't expect an overnight flood of games. Certainly, some 3-D chip makers will work directly with game makers to create high-tech toys that are designed to show off the power of the new chips. For example, GTE Interactive is working on a 3-D fighting game called FX-Fighter that will support Cirrus Logic's accelerator.

But the real flood of games will have to wait until 3-D accelerators can gain significant market penetration. It will take some time for that to occur and for game developers to adapt their products to support the new hardware.

In the meantime, companies who want to be on the cutting edge will have to support all the new hardware, much as they are now forced to support a variety of sound cards. For example, Looking Glass Technologies says it will modify its high-tech flight sim, Flight Unlimited, to support new 3-D consumer hardware as soon as it becomes commercially available. Expect to see plenty of choices by the fall of 1995. We can't wait.

TECH SHOP

S.O.S.

More memory madness, Internet directories, and Warped priorities.

Demo Woe-Woe

I recently got a free demo disk of the game Hardball 4. My computer is a 486SX with a 340MB hard drive. When I installed the demo and tried to run it, it said I didn't have enough free memory. The computer came with 4MB of RAM. I already ran MemMaker and got the same error message. What should I do? What happens when I purchase my next big program? I'm thinking of getting Under a Killing Moon.

Steve Stojanovich
Via America OnLine

What do I look like, Accolade's technical support line?

Okay, I can't really troubleshoot your problem based on the info you gave me, but here are a couple things to try:

First, look for a README file on the demo disk or in the demo directory on your hard drive. If such a file exists, it may have more information on exactly how much memory the demo needs to run. It may even have some suggestions for solving your memory problems.

Second, REM out (type "REM" in front of) any unnecessary lines in your CONFIG.SYS or AUTOEXEC.BAT files. You may even want to REM out such things as sound and mouse drivers to save extra space, if the demo can run without them.

Don't depend on MemMaker to solve all your memory problems. The latest version of Microsoft's memory optimizer does a pretty good job of freeing up precious RAM, but it can't work miracles. You should also check to see if the demo requires extended or expanded memory, and make sure you tell MemMaker to set up things properly.

Also, don't expect that 4MB of RAM is going to be enough. A lot of today's games (and their demos) want a bare minimum of 4MB total RAM, and will give you bare minimum performance in return. 8MB is safer. Heck, Under a Killing Moon really prefers 16MB. It's a fact of life that what was a lot of memory a year ago isn't nearly enough now.

Finally, why don't you give Accolade technical support a call, eh? They're at 408-296-8400.

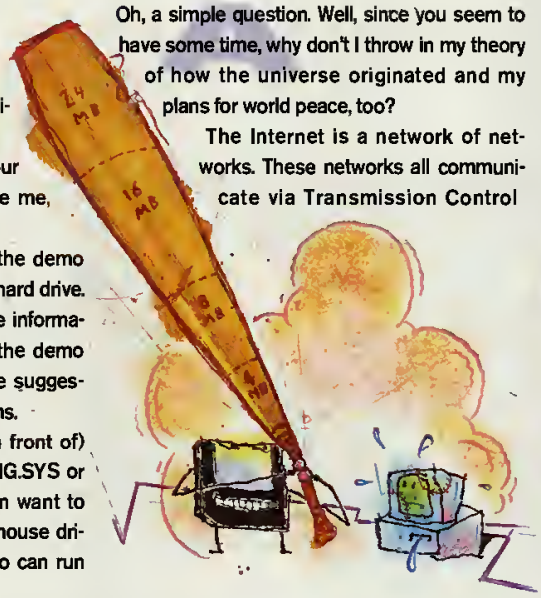
Internet Newbie

I'm new to the Internet, and I'd like to know how the system works. I'd also like to know if there are any catalogues or books with E-mail addresses and what all the possibilities of the Internet are.

Christophe Fonteyne
(Internet address withheld)

Oh, a simple question. Well, since you seem to have some time, why don't I throw in my theory of how the universe originated and my plans for world peace, too?

The Internet is a network of networks. These networks all communicate via Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol, or TCP/IP, which is a techie way of saying they all speak the same language. Thousands of companies, schools, and individuals connect their computers with TCP/IP, and the result is the Internet.



Unlike commercial online entities such as America Online or Prodigy, no one person or group runs the Internet. Fortunately, the various users generally agree on uniform ways to do things like sending mail and retrieving files. This means that Internet users have access to huge amounts of information spread throughout the world. If you have the right software, and know where to look, you can find just about everything somewhere on the Internet.

There are a number of ways to find your way around. One of the most common seems to be blindly stumbling across interesting info. If you have some idea what you're doing, you can use tools such as archie and gopher to dig up some gems, too.

Beginners may want to turn to a new crop of books that list various interesting Internet services. A couple good ones are The Internet After Hours by Andy Eddy (Prima Publishing, $19.95), which lists a variety of entertainment-oriented Internet activities, and The Internet Yellow Pages by Harley Hahn and Rick Stout (Osborne/McGraw Hill, $27.95), which tells you where to find everything from special-interest newsgroups to President Clinton's daily itinerary. And be on the lookout for an Internet primer in a future issue of E^2.

Warp Speed

What the heck is Warp? Does it replace DOS?

Roger Williams
Wilmington, Delaware

Warp is the latest version of IBM's OS/2 operating system. The idea behind Warp is to make OS/2 easy to install and use with most PCs. It can either install over your current version of DOS or Windows, or you can buy a "fullpack" edition that lets you start with a bare hard drive.

OS/2, for those who don't know, is a 32-bit operating system that also runs DOS and Windows applications. Being 32-bit, OS/2 takes better advantage of 32-bit processors, such as 386s and 486s. It handles memory better than DOS or Windows, has extensive multimedia functionality, and is reportedly faster with a lot of existing applications. Unfortunately, IBM dropped the OS/2 marketing ball several years ago after Microsoft pulled out of its OS/2 partnership with IBM to concentrate on Windows. The result has been a miserable lack of software.

IBM is now trying hard to make OS/2 a success, but only time will tell if game and multimedia developers will jump on the bandwagon and turn OS/2 into a viable platform. My guess is that they won't: DOS is the game platform of the moment, and Microsoft is trying to make

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID POVILAITIS

sure Windows 95 will be the game platform of the future.

Living in a PC's Shadow

Could you please tell me about "shadow memory?" Is it a good thing? I've heard it can make my system run faster, but I don't know how to turn it on.

Steve Lipman
New York, New York

Shadow memory, shadow RAM, and shadow ROM all describe what happens when the PC copies some of its most basic instructions from read-only memory (ROM) into your system's RAM, or random access memory. These routines control the communications between your computer and components like disk drives and video cards. Because RAM is generally faster than ROM, using shadow RAM can improve system performance.

Generally, you can enable and disable shadow memory from your computer's BIOS (Basic Input Output System) setup screens. How you get to the BIOS setup depends on your computer, but generally you simply press a key or key combination (often the Delete key) as the machine starts to boot up. Check your manual to find out exactly how to access your BIOS setup.

You may not want to use shadow memory, though. Some software, including the DOS extenders used in a lot of games, can run into conflicts with shadowed ROM routines. Shadowed ROM also uses up extended memory that your games and multimedia titles may want for themselves. So your favorite titles might encounter memory problems even though your machine appears to have enough RAM.

Fax, mail, or e-mail your queries to the S.O.S. staff at:

- *Electronic Entertainment*
  951 Mariner's Island Blvd., Suite 700
  San Mateo, CA 94404
  - Fax: 415-349-7781
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Sorry, but we can't send personal responses to every question.

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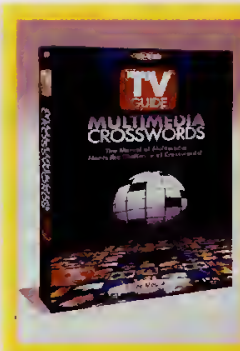

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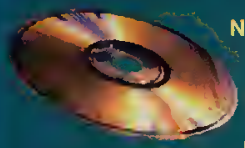

No one wants to read a whole electronic book; those on-disk versions of novels are much easier to tackle in the ever-popular paperback and hardcover formats.

But you *can* have big fun with an e-book. Try playing Keyword Voyager (named after leading e-book publisher The Voyager Co.). Using the FIND command to show the number of occurrences of any word, you and a friend take turns entering words of at least four letters. Score one point for each hit; the most points after five tries wins.

To get you started, here are selected word scores from Voyager's computer version of William Gibson's cyberpunk classic *Neuromancer.*

Word	Hits
Case (main character's name)	418
kill	55
matrix	35
Japan	35
sleep	32
cyberspace	27
cowboy	20
computer	20
brain	19
metal	18
Internet	0
hacker	0

Great Morphs In History

Morphing may be the latest buzz in high-tech wizardry, but folks have been mutating from one thing into another for years. A few examples:

1. Mild-mannered reporter Clark Kent into Superman
2. Michael Jackson, from funky knee-high soul brother into preternaturally pale freak of nature
3. Millionaire Bruce Wayne into Batman; his youthful ward Dick Grayson into Robin
4. Dr. Jekyll into Mr. Hyde
5. Gregor Samsa into a cockroach in Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*
6. The Ugly Duckling into a Swan

CD-ROM Magazines The Hard Way

We never suspected it, but all the issues of *People* magazine published for the past two decades have just been building up to the multimedia CD-ROM retrospective extravaganza that pulls them together in one place, People Magazine: 20 Amazing Years of Pop Culture. Now we're wondering what titles other magazines might give to their complete works on disc...

Newsweek: 60 Unbelievable Years Without Mentioning Cyberspace; One Ridiculous Year of Mentioning It Every Week

Reader's Digest: 350,000 Amazing Mildly Amusing Anecdotes

Highlights for Children: 50 Unfathomable Years of Presidents' Faces Hidden in Nature Drawings

Architectural Digest: 74 Tremendous Years of Readers Saying, "Yeah, Like Anyone I Know Can Afford That"

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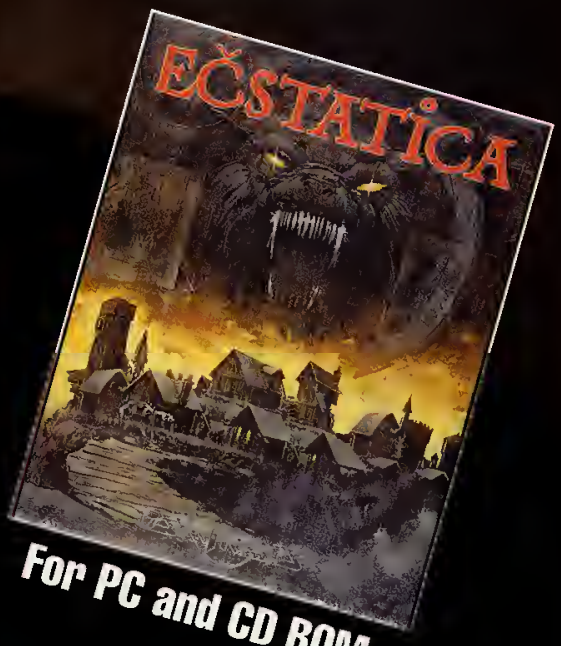

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